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ABSTRACT

In 1992 the Pew Partnership launched a national initiative aimed at discovering new knowledge about how citizens accomplish significant, lasting improvements in their communities. The Partnership chose smaller cities as the focus for this experimental effort, granting each of 14 cities up to $400,000 for a 3-year period. Eight of the cities later received additional funds. Partner groups in these cities provided a 25% local match for all fundings. This report describes the projects, their approaches, and some of the consequences of their activities. Most of the projects were intended to bring about broad urban changes, but many had implications for educational improvement. Several focused on providing child and family services in partnership with schools. Some focused on cultural awareness and multicultural efforts, and one involved opening middle schools after hours for youth and community programs and services. As the partner groups unfolded their efforts over four stages, their insights into ways to accomplish civic change deepened. In the first stage, getting ready and getting started, the partner groups faced the dilemma of pace and channeling energy and enthusiasm. In the second stage, the dilemma was one of focus, with the associated challenges of discovering enough agreement to maintain a focus toward the program's specific valued outcomes. In the third stage, partner groups carried out work that made the experience of community more tangible to civic change practitioners and other citizens. In some communities, this also made possible a significant integration of economic-development and community-development efforts. The fourth stage of growth was that of building civic change capacity. Of the 14 groups, 12 have found ways to continue their civic change efforts, and the other 2 groups have found ways to continue some aspects of their work under different auspices. The early efforts of these projects have value for anyone interested to improvements in urban life in the United States. Eight hypotheses of civic change are presented. (SLD)

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Just Call It EFFECTIVE

Civic Change: Moving from Projects to Progress

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The mission of the Pew Partnership is to build stronger communities. We work with local and national partners to:

- design and implement new solutions to tough problems;
- catalyze local civic leadership for action; and
- research and disseminate cutting-edge urban strategies.

"Just Call It Effective"

Civic Change: Moving from Projects to Progress

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SECTION I

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 1992, with the support of The Pew Charitable Trusts, the Pew Partnership in Charlottesville, Virginia, launched its first national initiative. The initiative aimed to discover new knowledge about how citizens accomplish significant, lasting improvements in their communities. The Pew Partnership chose smaller cities as the focus for this experimental effort, believing that the mechanisms and effects of citizens' change efforts would be most visible in these settings.

Using size and other criteria, the Partnership identified more than 100 cities with populations between 50,000 and 150,000 that were eligible for participation in the initiative. In 1993, after a competitive application process, the Partnership awarded $6 million in grants and technical assistance to 14 communities across the nation. This investment eventually leveraged more than $27 million in additional public and private investment in these cities.

The Partnership granted each city up to $400,000 for a three-year period. In 1996, eight of the 14 cities, in another competitive process, received an additional $50,000 each in one-year funding. The Partner groups in each city provided a 25-percent local match for all funding. In addition to the grants to communities, the Pew Partnership invested in technical assistance, research, and communication in support of the efforts in the 14 cities.

As part of its application, each Partner group chose a specific, discrete project to serve as its learning vehicle for developing new knowledge about how to accomplish civic change. The Pew Partnership uses this working definition of civic change:

> *Civic change is the ability of a community to define and implement the necessary elements of community life and work that will improve the capacity of the community and its people to meet their own needs and the needs of their fellow citizens in a fair and equitable way.*

The Partner groups in the 14 cities agreed to an experimental context in which they accomplished their discrete project goals while also paying conscious attention to learning how to work effectively on other community issues.

Neither the Pew Partnership nor the Partner groups in the 14 cities had access to guidelines or road maps for undertaking their experiments. Instead, the Pew Partnership offered the Partner groups considerable freedom to invent new strategies and practices, and provided a learning environment enriched with research information, frequent communication, technical assistance, and important semi-annual gatherings at which Partner groups learned from each other and from a wide array of prominent community-change practitioners. In addition, The Pew Charitable Trusts' staff and Partnership national project staff provided consistent encouragement for Partner groups' inventive efforts.

Using traditional measures alone, the Partner groups produced noteworthy results. Partners tackled and made significant advances in such arenas as increased school attendance, decreased vandalism and adjudication, business development, downtown invigoration, and extending the opportunity of home ownership to formerly excluded people. In addition to accomplishing these valuable outcomes, Partners built on their successes and documented positive results in the structures and processes through which communities improve themselves. For example, Partner groups that established effective mentoring programs in their communities moved next to increase the effectiveness and coordination among mentoring programs in much larger regions, and then continued expanding their approaches to increasing young people's well-being. Partner groups that initiated successful development strategies in one place, then expanded both to new locations and to new developmental targets, became resources and catalysts for continuing change. In every Partner community, people improved citizens' access to both dialogue and decision making about significant community issues.

The quality and quantity of community improvements resulting from Partner groups' efforts suggest that their "civic change orientation" had a beneficial effect. At the outset, Partner groups knew that their approach to civic change would necessarily include a long-term focus, a commitment to collaborative work with local partners, and a commitment to invent new ways of doing things. As the Partner groups unfolded their work through four stages of growth, their insights into ways to accomplish civic change deepened as a result of dilemmas they faced and the practices they used to address the dilemmas.

In the first stage—getting ready and getting started—Partner groups faced the dilemma of pace. This dilemma lies in deciding how to channel the natural energy and enthusiasm that accompany new beginnings. Partner groups were faced with the need both to invest in new learning and relationship building because of the long-term aspects of their civic change commitment, and to produce some

quick results or early wins in order to gain credibility. Partner groups addressed the dilemma by concentrating on both short-term and long-term practices that contribute to more powerful connections among people, ideas, and opportunities. All Partner groups invited and engaged new people in civic work during this first stage. Many Partner groups also invested directly in formal learning and training efforts, and all developed informal learning strategies. In addition, Partner groups recognized the immediate importance of communicating with their communities, with a particular focus on new opportunities for participation. Most Partner groups initiated strong relationships with their local media at this stage, and developed a variety of communication strategies that they used, with constant encouragement and support from the Pew Partnership project office, throughout all the stages of their work.

VOICES

You can never know enough, but you still have to actually do something. Keep taking in new information. Stay open. Don't close the discussion down just because you've started to move. Make room for what others bring, and what those who arrive later have to say. There is a balancing act between good process and some action steps. You really do need the good process, but you still have to get out of the box and perform. Show you mean it; get something done.

Mike Loftin
Santa Fe, New Mexico

In the first stage, also, Partners began to use practices that encourage candid conversation, particularly about issues of inequity and exclusion in their communities. In every community, in some way, Partner groups began addressing the deep, historic divisions—typically based on differences in race, class, age, and ethnic background—that often stand in the way of community advancement. Some Partner groups used specific, formal dialogue or training strategies to address these differences. Other groups worked for a new spirit of candor in their regular interactions and work with each other.

In the second stage, as Partners began carrying out their work, they faced the dilemma of focus. Having succeeded in engaging a wide variety of new people, with different interests and little experience in working together in any community-change context, Partner groups were challenged to discover enough agreement to maintain a focus toward specific valued outcomes. Because people have different experiences and interests, they have different views about what kinds of community work they should do together. The dilemma of focus is sharpened because so few citizens have experience in joint work with people whose ideas differ from their own. Because most citizens are novices at defining and solving community problems with other people, no shared body of knowledge exists as to what people should do first and in what way.

Partner groups' practices in the second stage aimed at increasing citizens' abilities to take joint responsibility for civic change. The second stage challenged Partner groups to "give common ground a name"—to make the core vision both accessible and compelling, so that citizens would adopt it as their own. In order to boost citizens' ownership of community-change efforts, Partners typically provided substantial support to local allies, sharing credit and sharing power. In some cases, Partners developed significant resources and then placed them under the control of a local partner.

In the second stage, also, Partners emphasized the validity of local, community-based ways of measuring progress, and celebrated early gains publicly to sustain energy and attract new people. Keeping in mind the maxim that "people support what they help create," Partners recognized the interwoven nature of personal change and community change, and found ways to seek and use people's individual gifts for community benefit.

While beginning to carry out the work, Partners began developing and using "civic manners," those thoughtful, respectful habits that make it easier to accomplish work together. Even as some specific project efforts began to solidify, many Partners kept an invitation open to new people, and found effective ways to assist an increasing number of citizens in taking more responsibility for civic change work. Partner groups relied on some specific and strategic language to help people remember their common purpose, sometimes developing "watchwords" that took on special meaning through repeated use. In this formative second stage, Partner groups in most cities also invested energy in creating public spaces and public forums that boosted citizens' opportunities to take responsibility for addressing community change.

VOICES

You can tag this work as liberal because government is involved. You can tag it as conservative because it depends on responsibility and self-fixing. We just call it effective. It is about politics in the pure sense, which means bringing people together to work for common goals.

Alice Day
Longview, Texas

In the third stage, Partner groups began to produce results, and began to be known for those results. Often these results stemmed from an extraordinary investment by a group of people at the heart of the effort. With the appearance of these rewarding results, new opportunities for additional work emerged. Both staff and engaged citizens began to feel that the work is never-ending and overwhelming. Most of the Partner groups found themselves in stage three with one or two years of funding remaining from the Pew Partnership, and at least 20 years of expectations regarding long-term community change. The dilemma of commitment arose in this stage because it is necessary for the people who produce the results not only to continue being productive once the momentum is established, but also to take time for reflection, renewal, and rest, if they are to continue their participation.

Partner groups addressed the dilemma of commitment by finding ways to underscore the linkage between personal growth and continuing civic change. Partner groups particularly encouraged reflective conversation between Partner organizations as a way to offer the personal benefits of insight and learning while also continuing to produce ideas that result in community improvements.

In the third stage, as in other stages, Partners consciously carried out work that made the experience of community, with its built-in satisfactions, more tangible to civic change practitioners and other citizens alike. Partner groups boosted civic workers' energy by nurturing positive linkages between resource-rich institutions and energetic, focused community efforts. In some Partner communities, this stage also made possible a significant integration of economic-development and community-development efforts.

In the fourth stage of growth—building civic change capacity—some Partner groups found that their

opportunities to capitalize on their discrete projects and move toward broader civic change expanded significantly. In building civic change capacity, Partner groups faced the dilemma of continuing change.

The dilemma of continuing change occurs because successful change threatens the people who are favored by the present situation, and can cause them to become skillful obstacles to further advancement. In addition, civic change practitioners themselves, having succeeded with change through one set of strategies, may face difficulties in keeping both themselves and their strategies fresh and open to further change.

Partner groups are young, and have limited experience with the fourth, continuing stage of change, or with strategies to address its built-in dilemma. The findings about Partner group practices in this stage are necessarily somewhat speculative, even though the Partner groups have already faced their first, fundamental continuation challenge—how to fund ongoing work after Pew Partnership funding ended.

For six groups, Pew Partnership funding ended early in 1997; for eight groups, Partnership funding ended early in 1998. Of the 14 groups, 12 have developed resources to continue—and in several cases, expand—the civic change work they began with Pew Partnership funds. The remaining two groups have developed ways to continue some aspects of their efforts under different auspices.

The practices that sustain continuing change include responsiveness, flexibility, and ongoing human and leadership development. Partner groups in the fourth stage, as in all other stages, built on a commonly shared belief that "one thing leads to another." The practice of building on what works seems destined to underpin Partner groups' ongoing approaches to sustaining change. By the fourth stage, Partner groups' resistance to building substantial organizational structures for their efforts clearly demonstrated a commitment to flexibility and responsiveness. Partner groups typically insisted on working from low-key, small, coordination-oriented entities that they typically labeled "an initiative," or "a network," or other titles, none of which connotes a substantial organization.

To sustain continuing change, Partner groups held fast to their view of communities as asset-rich environments. In particular, Partner groups nurtured the leadership assets of citizens, and made specific efforts to link progressive traditional leaders with emerging new leaders.

During all four stages of Partner groups' growth, three entities provided them with consistent encouragement and support: The Pew Charitable Trusts (the funder), the national advisory board, and the national project office in Charlottesville, Virginia. The Pew Charitable Trusts appointed a strong advisory board, and the project office engaged advisory board members as true partners for the 14 cities. The Pew Charitable Trusts' staff and the national project staff maintained high levels of enthusiasm for the discovery-oriented, experimental nature of the Partner groups' work. The project office also provided a steady focus on communication, without which Partner groups might have made fewer advances. In addition, the project office acted as intermediary between the funder and the Partner groups, a relationship that offered advantages to both. The funder received more information, at a higher level of synthesis, than any single Partner group could have produced. This high-quality information came at minimal cost to the Partner groups in terms of the energy and time required to document change efforts.

The early lessons from the Pew Partnership initiative have value for communities, citizens,

funders, evaluators, and coaches committed to improvements in urban life in American cities. The experiences in these 14 cities suggest that a civic change orientation has significant promise as a means for citizens to reach wider and deeper into the possibilities for generating and sustaining long-term change in their communities.

Tom Dewar

David Dodson

Virginia Paget

Rona Roberts

SECTION 2

INTRODUCTION AND INITIAL PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS

What can smaller cities contribute to the field of knowledge about how people in cities of all sizes can successfully address complex urban issues? This question launched the Pew Partnership in 1992, as a special initiative of The Pew Charitable Trusts.

The Pew Partnership's smaller-cities initiative is the focus of this report. At its launch, the Pew Partnership invited more than 100 cities with populations between 50,000 and 150,000 to apply for participation. In order to be eligible, each city also had to be both the largest city in its Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area (SMSA) and the only city in the SMSA that fit the population parameters. The 14 Partner groups that were chosen in a competitive process agreed to serve as laboratories for civic change in an experiment of bold proportions. They agreed not only to undertake a civic change project of their own choosing but, more importantly, to use that project as a vehicle for discovering the workings of civic change. These 14 groups in smaller cities became partners in learning more about how citizens envision together the communities they could have, and then take actions to move toward those visions. Each of the 14 cities received up to $400,000 for three years, and eight of the cities received an additional $50,000 for fourth-year funding. The cities raised a 25-percent local match for all funding. The Pew Partnership invested a total of $6 million in technical assistance, research, and communication for the entire Pew Partnership initiative.

DESCRIPTIONS OF INITIAL PROJECTS

Here is a brief description of the initial discrete projects, the starting points in each of the 14 cities.

ALBANY, GEORGIA

Creating New Learning Environments for At-Risk Youth

This community-wide partnership provided at-risk adolescents with an intensive academic intervention through the school system, an internship program to increase job skills, an arts component to build self-esteem, and an outreach initiative to identify family concerns.

CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA

Reaching Children and Families: A Civic Forum

The Civic Forum, a coalition of business, government, nonprofit, and neighborhood representatives, addressed the well-being of children and families while developing a mechanism to meet other community challenges.

CHARLESTON, WEST VIRGINIA

Family Resource Centers: The Community Engaging Families

This collaboration between social-service providers, schools, and local and state governments has established model Family Resource Centers in accessible locations, such as neighborhood schools, community centers, and public housing developments.

DANVILLE, VIRGINIA

Southern Virginia 2000: Strengthening the 21st-Century Workforce

As a regional workforce-development consortium, Southern Virginia 2000 implemented a comprehensive, long-term strategy, involving business, education, and citizen representatives, to identify employer needs and to prepare the workforce for the demands of a diverse and changing economy.

EUGENE, OREGON

Networking for Youth: A Community-Wide Mentoring Program

This broad-based coalition between business, labor, schools, nonprofits, and social-service agencies mobilized a wide array of individuals and organizations to invest in young people by developing a model community mentoring program.

FARGO, NORTH DAKOTA/MOORHEAD, MINNESOTA

Creating Opportunity Through Diversity

Through a regional collaboration between Fargo, North Dakota, and its adjacent city, Moorhead, Minnesota, citizens addressed the opportunities and challenges of an increasingly diverse population by implementing extensive educational and outreach strategies to promote understanding of the different cultures in the region.

LONGVIEW AND TYLER, TEXAS

Regional Collaboration and Leadership Development

These two East Texas cities joined together to organize neighborhoods, to develop regional and grass-roots leadership, and to mobilize both communities to work for change.

PEORIA, ILLINOIS

BUILD PEORIA!: Life Skills for Young Adults

By educating and employing disenfranchised youth, this inclusive partnership responded to young adults' immediate concerns about job opportunities, while developing a long-term, comprehensive strategy to reduce risk-factors for the youth of the community.

PINE BLUFF, ARKANSAS

Creating Positive Environments for Young People

This coalition of the schools, the youth-service providers, and the city responded to the concerns of young people by creating more avenues for youth and adult communications, and by enhancing opportunities for children and adolescents in the community.

RAPID CITY, SOUTH DAKOTA

Native American Mentoring and Youth Peer Counseling

Building on models of cultural and peer mentorship, this partnership between two community non-profits focused the attention of civic leaders on the challenges facing all young people in Rapid City.

SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO

Creating Affordable Housing and Preserving Community

This coalition between the city, regional financial institutions, and local nonprofits increased the supply of affordable housing and preserved mixed-income neighborhoods in a community where dramatically escalating real-estate values are displacing long-time residents.

WACO, TEXAS

Lighted Schools: Mobilizing the Community for Youth

This comprehensive community initiative opened neighborhood middle schools after hours to provide primary health care, cultural enrichment, and recreational opportunities to middle-school students and their families.

WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA

HandMade in America: A Regional Community Development Strategy

This broad-based coalition in Western North Carolina implemented a 22-county community-development strategy based on the unique history of the region as a center for handmade crafts.

A SAMPLE OF PROJECT RESULTS

This report focuses primarily on the experimental portion of the Pew Partnership, namely its civic change component, which was the effort to build on the learning from individual projects to discover how to accomplish civic change in broader arenas. Before shifting to that experimental focus, however, it is important to note that strictly in terms of their initial discrete projects, the Partner groups accomplished significant results. Here are a few examples that suggest the scale and diverse nature of the results:

- $5.5 million in grants leveraged an additional $27 million in direct and indirect support for civic change efforts in these 14 communities.
- In Santa Fe, 369 lower-income families are new home buyers, an accomplishment that could not have happened without a broad collaboration. Neighborhood Housing Services Executive Director, Mike Loftin, adds, "For the first time nonprofit organizations here took it upon themselves to produce affordable housing, not just advocate for it, and as of December 31, 1997, we have 232 housing units (including both rental and ownership) that we wouldn't have had otherwise."
- In Charleston, West Virginia, the Family Resource Centers model has served more than 1,000 families and is being replicated throughout the state.
- In Western North Carolina, people whose studios or business locations are included in *The Craft Heritage Trails of Western North Carolina* guidebook, produced by HandMade in America, can document a 20-percent increase in sales since publication. In the six small towns that asked for HandMade in America's support, as they learned and practiced sustainable development strategies, at least 24 new businesses are underway, of which ten are related to crafts. Early in 1998, HandMade identified $4.4 million in new public and private investments in Western North Carolina in the previous two years.
- In Rapid City's North Middle School, the number of reported fights involving Native Americans dropped by half in 1995-96 from the previous year, and then dropped by another half in 1996-97. At Central High School, the number fell from 31 in 1995-96 to two this past year. In both cases this decline was largely attributed to the ATEYAPI mentoring program and its work on dealing with conflict, anger, and communication. Rapid City's Sheriff Dee Glasgow says, "The kind of cooperation between the schools, juvenile court, and sheriff's office around some of these at-risk kids is unprecedented, and it is starting to show up in the kinds of outcomes we most care about."
- In Waco, students in four new "Lighted Middle Schools" are showing demonstrably improved grades and school attendance, while their juvenile-court referrals are declining. The Partner group, McLennan County Youth Collaboration/Communities in Schools, also led the community process and wrote the plan that resulted in a $3 million Enterprise Community designation in 1995.
- In Lane County, Oregon, home of Networking for Youth, more than 2,000 young people and adults are involved in mentoring initiatives, and 500 summer jobs for young people have grown out of these relationships.

Results such as these, typically exceeding Partner groups' initial expectations, stemmed from the Partner groups' commitment to experiment with a civic change orientation. Partner groups agreed to this experimental approach for their projects, even though at the outset neither they nor the Pew Partnership had clear definitions or guidelines about the nature of civic change. In support of this approach, the Pew Partnership created a context of support, freedom, and encouragement for communities to try bold new approaches.

DOCUMENTING LESSONS LEARNED

Cities received their first funding in 1993. A year later, as the Partner groups were firmly established in most places, the Pew Partnership invited a group of researchers to begin working with the Partner groups to learn with them about the nature of civic change, and then to document lessons learned from the experiment. The research team included Tom Dewar, David Dodson, Virginia Paget, and Rona Roberts. Here is a brief description of who we are:

TOM DEWAR joined this research team because of his intense, lifelong interest in civic change, bringing to it a combination of practitioner, research, and policy-analysis skills and experience. He has long been engaged in the kinds of work the Partner groups are attempting, and has been a community organizer, teacher, neighborhood leader, evaluator, policy advocate, and analyst. After 15 years on the faculty at the University of Minnesota, Tom joined Rainbow Research in Minneapolis as Senior Project Associate for seven years. Early in 1998 he returned home to Chicago to become the Director of Program Evaluation for the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation.

DAVID DODSON has been Executive Vice President of MDC, a nonprofit research firm in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, since 1987. He formerly served as Executive Director of the Cummins Engine Foundation and Director of Corporate Responsibility, Cummins Engine Company. David's educational background includes architecture and planning, ethics and theology, and public and private management. He has served as project leader for major MDC projects in school reform, workforce development, and community economic development in the Carolinas, the Deep South, and Appalachia. He is coauthor of *Building Communities of Conscience and Conviction: Lessons from MDC's Recent Experience.*

VIRGINIA PAGET currently directs the Individualized Master of Arts Program at the McGregor School of Antioch University in Yellow Springs, Ohio. Before becoming a full-time academic, Gina was a program officer at the Kettering Foundation, where she designed community decision-making and problem-solving processes and trained citizens interested in using them. During the '70s and early '80s, she was active in community organizing around school issues in St. Louis and in running a mentoring program for inner-city youth in Dayton.

RONA ROBERTS is co-founder of Roberts & Kay, Inc., a 15-year-old Kentucky firm committed to cultivating democratic practices in workplaces and communities. Rona works with clients in three sectors, advising on long-term, beneficial change efforts that have many partners and stakeholders; conducting in-depth focus-group research on public issues; and assisting people who are starting something new. Before founding RKI in 1983, Rona worked as a management consultant, directed the Office of Kentucky Legal Services Programs, and served in the Philippines with the U.S. Peace Corps. Her community work is in the areas of healing racial divisions, developing civic capacity, and supporting community arts.

Members of the research team visited each city, conducted in-depth interviews with groups and individuals on several occasions, attended gatherings of the Partner groups from 1994 through 1997, and read all project reports, case studies, and other documentary materials produced by either the Partner groups or the Pew Partnership national project office.

The research team focused on understanding and documenting the Partner groups' unfolding discoveries about the nature of civic change.

Researchers began producing drafts of early findings in 1996. At key points researchers invited groups of Partners to review drafts and comment on emerging themes, so that the documentation could closely reflect Partner groups' actual lessons learned. This report describes many of those lessons. The report is presented in a framework that is organized around the Partner groups' growth stages.

Between 1994 and 1997, the research team observed Partners becoming increasingly knowledgeable and skilled at the experimental effort of guiding civic change. This report documents some of the lessons Partners learned that may prove useful to other citizens in other communities.

SECTION 3

FOR CITIZENS AND COMMUNITIES:

Lessons Learned From Civic Change in 14 Smaller Cities

What constitutes civic change? How is it different from volunteerism? What distinguishes civic change from successful collaboratives among public-private groups or human-service providers? How is civic change different from a community project aimed at addressing problems like violence or underemployment? How do communities accomplish civic change?

This section reports some initial responses to these questions, developed out of the experiences of the Pew Partners—groups of people in 14 smaller cities who received funding from the Pew Partnership. The responses to the questions take two forms: dilemmas that emerged as the Pew Partner groups' experiences unfolded, and practices the Partner groups undertook in their efforts to make permanent, positive improvements, both in their communities and in their communities' capacities for progress.

The dilemmas and practices are organized according to the stage of civic change work during which they are most likely to occur. The four stages, which have fuzzy boundaries and considerable overlap, are these:

STAGE 1: Getting ready and getting started
STAGE 2: Carrying out the work
STAGE 3: Producing results
STAGE 4: Building civic change capacity

STAGE

GETTING READY AND GETTING STARTED

When the Pew Partnership invited 14 smaller cities to become Partners in a three-year experiment, it got the communities' attention. In these cities, where populations are between 50,000 and 150,000, becoming a Pew Partner validated and gave new life to some existing, fledgling efforts, while bringing other efforts into being for the first time. The prestige of winning a national competition gave a significant boost to most Partner groups' efforts to win support in their own communities. Most of the working groups that had won the grants found their new Partner status made it easier than before to build local energy and enthusiasm for their visions of change.

The Pew Partnership granted each community up to $400,000, with a 25-percent required match, over three years. Eight communities received an additional $50,000 each in fourth-year funding, again with a required 25-percent match.

From the beginning, staff in the Pew Partnership project office encouraged the cities to see their efforts as experiments aimed at learning how to bring about long-term community improvements in many arenas of community life. The original request for proposals invited each city to choose a discrete project that would serve as a learning vehicle for developing new knowledge about how to accomplish civic change. In addition, the original grant applications had asked applicants to focus on "collaborative community problem-solving, issue identification, and solutions in a long-term context, and, equally weighted, the implementation of innovative change strategies that help the community move beyond the discrete projects." ("Pew Partnership for Civic Change Request for Preliminary Proposals," 1993)

The project office's consistent commitment to an experimental approach freed the 14 Partner groups from many typical grant constraints and requirements related to producing early, short-term results. Even so, as the Partner groups readied themselves and prepared to launch their new efforts, they faced a dilemma that is typical of the first stage of civic change—the dilemma of pace.

THE DILEMMA OF PACE

Every city's civic change effort was headed by a group of people who already led full lives. In order to take best advantage of the new possibilities this initiative represented, these civic change leaders knew they needed to do at least three things:

- Organize and act immediately for quick results, in order to capitalize on the new enthusiasm the initiatives generated.
- Invite new allies into the initiative and get to know them, in order to lay the groundwork for a long-term, productive relationship.

- Invest time and energy in learning new ways to carry out the work skillfully. Every person's time and energy are limited. The dilemma lies in determining whether precious human resources are best used to hurry toward quick outcomes or to slow down for investment in long-term development. Which of these directions is most important during the first phase of civic change?

Pew Partner groups in most of the 14 cities refused to see this dilemma as demanding an either/or decision. Instead they viewed the enthusiasm people have at the beginning of positive, new civic change efforts as fuel for both short- and long-term choices and actions to produce civic change. That enthusiasm generates energy for connections with new people, new ideas, and new opportunities for work. Partner groups capitalized on that enthusiasm to attract new people to civic change work. The new Pew Partners also channeled citizens' initial enthusiasm toward increased investments in training, learning, and planning.

At the same time, Partner groups did not turn away from immediate media and public relations opportunities. In most of these smaller cities, media were eager to tell the story of their community's inclusion in a grant initiative sponsored by a major national foundation. Most Partner groups took advantage of these opportunities to highlight new opportunities for people to connect to civic change work.

Specifically, in their first stage of work, the Partner groups made it easy for people to be for things. Using media and other forms of communication, Partner groups drew explicit connections between the new opportunities for work and those things people already care about deeply: the future of children, pride in openness to diversity, a tradition or a cultural heritage, or simply inhabiting a certain place fully (that is, being and staying in this city). In Pine Bluff, for example, people talked about their interest in "making this place work."

Through focusing on connections among people, ideas, and opportunities, Partner groups took advantage of early momentum, while also taking the time to build significant human infrastructures for getting the work done. Yoke-Sim Gunaratne, Project Director of the Cultural Diversity Project in Fargo/Moorhead, said of this phase, "While it took more time and energy to accomplish anything at the beginning of the project, this relationship building and planning process added much trust, improved team effort, and spirit in the long run."

The wide variety of practices Pew Partners developed and used in the first phase of civic change all seemed in some way to contribute to building connections among people, ideas, and opportunities. Here are some examples of those practices.

THE PRACTICES

Invest in Learning

Some cities decided to invest significant energy in forthright training or workshop experiences. Fargo/Moorhead organizers reported that when participants met to make decisions about applying for the initial grant, the need for diversity training became immediately clear. Talking about the

possible grant produced an intense conversation about "diversity, racism, tolerance, and understanding," said the organizers; in fact, the conversation at this early meeting presented such difficulty, organizers said, that "the challenge of this project was experienced." Having learned firsthand the need to build communities that value diversity, the Fargo/Moorhead Partner group committed to a substantial investment in diversity training.

VOICES

Civic change doesn't occur just in a planned, linear kind of fashion. Lots of management kinds of things about change are not too helpful—do this many of one thing and this many of another. Lots of times it doesn't progress that way. You have a slow period while you are building a base and then things take off with some real speed. Sometimes you have to have some patience and some serenity with where you are until you begin to see something happen.

Alice Day
Longview, Texas

Significantly, the effort began with training for trainers. Newly arrived refugees from places such as Bosnia, Vietnam, Armenia, Haiti, Kurdistan, and Somalia joined with members of the already present Hispanic, Native American, and northern European groups in a common cause. As trainers of other trainers, the diverse core-group members shared the strengths of their own cultures and modeled the kinds of acceptance, understanding, and interest in diverse cultures that Fargo/Moorhead citizens must practice in order to forge strong bonds of community in their newly diverse context. Through the training of trainers, the Partner group in Fargo/Moorhead emphasized learning and built community assets out of ingredients that otherwise could have sparked community problems.

In Longview, Alice Day, Program Manager for the Longview Community Partnership (formally named "the Longview Drug Task Force, A Community Partnership"), explained:

> *We have training going on all the time. We try to deliver it in different ways. Sometimes we use experts. Sometimes people who do something are training others to do it. We are always bringing in new people. The training cycle has to continue. It has to be ongoing, flexible, and varied. It has to always be there.*

In addition to planned, structured learning activities, people at the heart of most Pew Partnership efforts spent some time and effort on less structured learning—dialogue, small projects, learning about stakeholders and their interests, and discovering through conversation where community efforts are fragmented or disconnected. Conversation—talk—was the basic form of learning underlying most of the learning approaches Partner groups used in the first stage, and on into later stages of their work. People talked to each other and told each other about their lives and their interests. This helped them realize their connections to each other. Through talking together, people learned how to put more emphasis on their shared interests.

Talk underpins learning in so many situations that it is easy to overlook its importance and not view it as a conscious learning strategy. In contrast to this typical situation, Partner groups in most Pew Partnership cities strategically valued, encouraged, and supported talk in many forms, some of which will be described in later parts of this report.

Invite and Engage New People

During the first stage of work, Partner groups in all 14 cities invested significant effort in inviting and engaging new people in civic change efforts. In Western North Carolina, HandMade in America brought people together who had never been at the same table before. For example, crafts people and business people had harbored a long-term resistance to working with each other, but they came together with many others in the organizing stages for HandMade. As in many Pew Partnership cities, the people at the heart of the Western North Carolina effort invested a great deal of energy in forming powerful connections with people new to civic change work. For example, all invitations to a large group of people to participate in the community-based planning for the project included the request to "come and bring someone with you." Formerly undervalued members of the community worked together for the first time. One North Carolinian said, "If there had been just a little bit of 'Maybe we have enough people. Maybe we don't need every single one of these people with their ideas,' we would have quit. Instead it grew."

The organizing process for HandMade in America took several months. More than 300 people met at 33 locations throughout Western North Carolina. One participant said, "It was very stimulating. We were coming from different directions; we had no idea how we would all interact. The more meetings we had, the more people wanted to get together." Eventually the people in each community, in a democratic process, chose their own representatives to the guiding body for the project.

Throughout Pew Partnership communities, people reported that they hadn't known each other before this initiative began. Now that they do know each other, they find each other more valuable and more trustworthy. In Peoria, for example, trainers in a program to assist former gang members in becoming employable forged new relationships with unions and employers in the community. Those employers report seeing potential in workers they would never have considered as employees before.

Pew Partner groups in several cities launched workshops, training, or seminars explicitly aimed at giving people new experiences of each other so they could form better, stronger connections. Reflecting many people's experiences, one workshop participant in Charleston, South Carolina, said, "We bonded." Michael Gilliard, then Youth Coordinator of Partners for a Better Pine Bluff, said, "We began closing gaps with these seminars—gaps between generations, between officials and citizens, between service providers and the people they serve, and among service providers who didn't know about or value each other's work."

A graduate of the Longview Tyler Leadership Foundation said that after completing that Partner-sponsored training program, with its focus on diversity and consensus, "Your name kind of goes out, and it gives you the confidence that you can make a difference, and it plugs you into the right people to make a difference." In Waco, the Lighted Schools program, partially funded by the Pew Partnership, dramatically increased new connections by going "from zero to 25 outside organizations using school facilities."

In every Pew Partnership community, decision-making tables enlarged, or additional tables emerged where few had existed before. In each place, people saw the value of inclusion when deciding on community improvements and taking steps to bring a community vision to reality. In expanding the opportunities for ownership, responsibility, and participation, each of these communities created new points of access and new ways that people who care and want to make a difference could connect more easily to an effort that compels them.

Commit to Candid Conversation, Particularly About Race

Like other communities in the United States, the Pew Partnership communities are places where some topics seem too difficult to discuss. Years turn into decades as people fail to discover how to talk about differences, particularly those that involve unequal opportunity and unequal resources.

Bridging historic divides by communicating candidly and building new relationships holds great promise, but people typically lack the skill and experience to launch and sustain these conversations. The possibility of getting lost in chaos or conflict is great. The possibility that people will not be able

IN HIS OWN WORDS

BRUCE LONG FOX is Executive Director of Rural America Initiatives in Rapid City, South Dakota. Rural America Initiatives founded the ATEYAPI (fatherhood) program to provide essential cultural mentors to adolescent males.

My expectations at first were shaped by my belief that this was really "just a project." That is, we had found this grant program that would give us money to carry out some of our existing work. I saw it all in a pretty narrow way, as a vehicle to carry out a particular project.

I started to change my thinking right away --from a project orientation to a broader community-change perspective. I found that it's a lot easier to accomplish things when you are on the inside, at the table. I had not really experienced that before. The Pew Partnership support network really helped—it opened up a lot of doors: the United Way, the City, certain local decision-makers, even federal money; all of these suddenly seemed in the same world I was in, and I slowly began to believe I not only was in that world too, but that I belonged. It was a real eye-opening experience. I found that if you had people really rooting for you, people like Pew, you can get a lot more done, and a lot more attention and recognition. I hadn't really changed, but perceptions of myself changed.

I came to see the work as long-term, not short-term agitation like I had been used to doing. And, really importantly, we shifted from seeing our work with youth as a way of "fixing" them or "working on a kid with lots of problems" to thinking about how the conditions of their life, and our community, could be changed. For that, attitudes would have to change, for attitudes shape their experience, and really define them as "at risk."

I would say a really important personal learning was that you get more done through engagement with others than through confrontation. Oh, there's a place for confrontation, but it is to send a signal, mark an issue, rather than to make community progress. Meeting people halfway, that's what you have to do. Looked at this way, the work becomes about widening the circle, about building relationships, and then about leveraging those relationships to move your message out and to take in what others are doing and seeking. This replaces the project orientation that I had worked with and through before.

I came to learn the value of good organizing, of turning people "out" and of turning them "on" to what we were doing and how they could contribute. All sorts of people came to know me through this work, or think they did, and I came to feel more connected, more knowledgeable. I came to see what others were doing, as well, and was really surprised to find that you can accomplish a lot of your own goals by working with and supporting and pursuing the goals of others.

I find that at the end of this project, still no one here is really addressing issues of race head on. I wish we had. But that is changing. We are looking for ways to focus on that now. And we will do it. I feel more capable and confident, and I think the Pew Partnership has been a part of that change. I thank them for that.

to create safe space or trust with each other, and will maintain their silence, is also strong. Without candid talk, the possibility of typecasting people and never getting to know their good ideas is significant, according to Mike Loftin, Executive Director of Neighborhood Housing Services of Santa Fe:

> *You have to check your assumptions about where people are coming from. I know I had to. There is a tendency to identify people with certain positions or to put them on sides. Well, that is self-fulfilling. It is based on the idea that people don't change, don't learn, and it also assumes people are less complicated or interesting than it turns out they are. But you'll never know that unless you engage them in some discussion, some dialogue.*

Some Partner groups chose to address this challenge by creating situations that would invite people to try a new form of dialogue in spite of the risk. The Charleston Civic Forum in Charleston, South Carolina, hosted structured evening talk sessions using a modified version of a "kiva" talking circle. In the "modified kivas," people sat in two concentric circles. With guidance from a skilled facilitator, people in the inner circle spoke about a challenging issue. People in the outer circle listened carefully. After a certain amount of time, the people in the inner circle moved to the outer circle, and a new group moved to the center. One such process featured three successive groups in the inner circle: first young people, then media employees, and finally advertising and PR experts who use media to sell products and promote ideas. The facilitator guided each through a series of questions about the nature and impact of media coverage of young people.

The Charleston Civic Forum's commitment to candid talk eventually led to a striking new realization. After two years' experience with the Pew Partnership and several innovative approaches to talking across racial differences, people at the heart of the Charleston Civic Forum realized that one group of citizens in their area—low-income whites—had had no role at all in these conversations. Ruth Heffron, then Executive Director of the Community Foundation Serving Coastal South Carolina, said:

> *We realized that for centuries middle-class and well-to-do white people had lifelong relationships with poor black people. When we replicated this mix in our structured dialogues, it felt new because people were meeting each other for the first time, but really we were working off an old pattern. We realized that we have no history at all of dialogue between middle-class or well-to-do white people and poor white people, or between poor black people and poor white people.*

Other Partner groups also conducted similar experiments, searching for new "containers" for risky, candid talk. People who took part in these experiences report that the benefits outweighed the risk.

In Pine Bluff, people knew they needed to find more candid and open ways to talk about differences in race and class. Partners for a Better Pine Bluff created training sessions to bring people together and invite them to engage in joint activities. These Partners intended for the training to lay the foundation for the kind of trust that would make candid talk possible. They had a sense that when people who are different from each other learn to speak candidly and listen well, the result is a dynamic and varied experience, full of new ideas.

The Pine Bluff investment in learning to talk more candidly yielded noteworthy returns. People formed new relationships where none had existed before between young people and old people, for

IN HIS OWN WORDS

W. E. AYRES of Pine Bluff, Arkansas, is a retired banker and serves as chair of the board for Partners for a Better Pine Bluff.

At the time of the Pew grant, I was just moving into the Presidency of Partners for a Better Pine Bluff (PBPB). My expectations were limited. I knew it would be complicated. I knew that some of the youth providers would be territorial. And frankly, I was most worried about whether the youth would step up to take advantage of this opportunity. It was slow to get started. People held back. You don't change hard-set patterns easily, and certainly some of the "better" ways we wanted to see had to be learned and practiced. So it took time. This kind of work really requires more time and staff support than I appreciated when we started.

We talked about the work in terms of organizations, but in practice it was really about individuals and their relationships. The diversity training was a great breakthrough. It gave folks some handles on how to talk more directly with each other and to the issues. We learned that the primary reason Caucasian youth weren't responding [to our early programs], for example, was peer pressure, so we changed our strategy. I don't think we ever solved the problem, but we came to have a better sense of it. We learned that the right kind of training can really change the dynamic.

In terms of what progress looks like, there was lots of direct involvement of youth, lots of youth-adult relationship building going on. There were new (often smaller) groups coming forward and being recognized. This was all to the good, but we fell short on our principal objective of connecting with both white and African-American youth. We made lots of real progress, though. And we invested in a great many people and groups that will be in it for the long haul in this community.

For real follow-through on initial workshops and events, the leadership of those groups and communities must be committed. Older African-American women, in particular, were an amazing force for change in our work. They were the key. They flexed their moral muscle with their families, friends, and groups. They didn't wait for the "right" ones to come along. The strong leaders were able to be both forthright and non-threatening at the same time. Personally, I have been very heartened by the extent to which some people have stepped up and gotten involved. It hasn't been perfect, but it has steadily broadened. The Chamber of Commerce has gotten more involved than I expected. And the churches. And the community groups. So there is a real reaching for a genuine "community-wide" feel to all this.

Our Racial Harmony Task Force has taught us a lot about the value of talking to each other face-to-face and heart-to-heart. The disharmony is real, but it can be talked about and talked through. This has been very gratifying to see, and personally rewarding to go through. I have always hated controversy. I called it being a peacemaker, but I really avoided a lot of conflict. I have learned through this work that some conflicts have to be addressed head on.

example, and between people with no official position and those with formal position and status. Partners for a Better Pine Bluff grew to take a more public role, with its events showing up on official calendars and attracting media coverage. Jefferson County, which includes Pine Bluff as its largest city, passed a one-cent sales tax earmarked for public safety. Currently, approximately $500,000 of the revenue from that tax is spent in support of youth activities. Recently, with the new social networks and confidence that emerged from that work, Partners for a Better Pine Bluff and the local

United Way took the lead in creating a Youth Summit.

In some cities, rather than focus on separate training or learning events, Partner groups worked on increasing the candor in everyday meetings and conversations. Ray Griffin, Danville City Manager, said, "The process and the structure of the project [Southern Virginia 2000] built Danville's capacity for straight talk." Candid talk served as one aspect of a larger, action-oriented agenda, pulling people into increasing levels of responsibility and engagement. Gregory Reid, Economic Development Director in Danville, said of Southern Virginia 2000, "The candor is greater. Now we have a Racial Harmony Council. Up to this time we never heard the term 'racial harmony' expressed. Now we have a Task Force as part of our visioning process that is dealing directly with that issue. We must continue to work on trust. It's an unfinished agenda." In Charleston, West Virginia, a participant in the Partner group noted that success had come quickly because of trust among the main actors. Another described a significant link between candor and trust: "Trust built up because we were allowed to be critical. We don't have formal agreements; we have open communication."

Be Ready to Seize Opportunities for New Connections

In several cities, the Pew Partner groups' initiatives built strategically on initiatives that were already on the communities' change agendas. For these cities, the support from the Pew Partnership seemed fortuitous, even miraculous, in its timing. These Partner groups benefited from the principle that "change favors a prepared community."

For example, well before the Pew Partnership was announced, newspaper articles in the *Longview News-Journal* called for citizens in Longview and its neighboring town, Tyler, to move past traditional rivalries and isolation toward a new regional sense of community and a new regional economy. When the news of the grant opportunity arrived, people had some preparation for taking advantage of the opportunity.

In addition to supporting a prior interest in regional cooperation, the Pew Partnership efforts in Longview built on several years of community-building work. Community policing had begun to make a difference in Longview. Citizens On Patrol (COPs) had engaged people in taking ownership of the safety of their neighborhoods. The Longview Community Partnership had begun to operate as a community-development entity. Using Pew Partnership funding, people in Longview and neighboring Tyler trained and fielded "neighborhood navigators" whose work was patterned after the successes of the Longview Community Partnership's employees and volunteers. In turn, Tyler had an established community-leadership program, the Leadership Foundation, that expanded to include people from Longview once the cities became Pew Partners.

In Eugene, in the two years before the Pew Partnership opportunity arose, Margaret Nichols, a visionary school superintendent, had grown deeply concerned about a complex set of changes that threatened to have a devastating effect on the area's young people. Jobs in the timber industry, once plentiful and offering decent pay whether a young person had graduated from high school or not, had nearly disappeared. Families were suffering. Dropout rates were rising. At the same time, state and federal budget cuts were reducing the services schools and public human-service programs could offer. Neither public nor private service providers had a history of collaborating and overcoming turf in a resource-scarce environment.

During the 18 months before the Pew Partnership opportunity became available in Eugene, Nichols and a small group of educators, business people, and civic leaders formed Networking for Youth. This network met regularly to consider what members could do to respond to the changes in the environment that threatened children, young people, and families. Once Eugene won the Pew Partnership grant, this investment in conversation and strategy development created greater readiness for expanding Networking for Youth's change efforts. Once the network was in full motion, it continued to take advantage of emerging opportunities. The Partners in Eugene developed a "civic change road map" that, among other benefits, made it possible to respond quickly to an opportunity to manage the area's school-to-work program.

VOICES

Be very bold. Have large, great goals to capture the imagination, like the 20-year time frame that has such significance for us. I don't think we could have engaged people in the same way with anything less than goals on this scale.

Becky Anderson
Western North Carolina

Networking for Youth's approach to each opportunity included engaging and creating systematic linkages, supported by strong databases, on behalf of children and youth. The expanding network included such community resources as young people themselves, schools, community places, shelters, government efforts, businesses, teachers, and more. Because Networking for Youth was already active, already beginning to produce, this Partner group also found itself positioned to help locate three Burger King Academies in area elementary schools that use the schools as magnets for community development, concentrating particularly on solving the problems and removing the barriers that keep children from deep engagement in learning.

In some of the Partner cities, activity related to the project focus of the Pew Partnership was not underway before the grant came. In these instances, getting started presented more challenges, and often more difficult ones. In Peoria, the murders of five young people in gang-style violence early in 1993 had created a crisis that city leaders were attempting to address when they learned of the opportunity to participate in the Pew Partnership. Prior to the rash of shootings, no coordinated civic change effort had been set in motion. Once the murders happened, there was little time before the grant submission date to build the shared knowledge base and the relationships that provide a solid foundation of agreement and commitment under better conditions. City leaders quickly developed a loose plan to educate former gang or "nation" members and to equip them with credible work experience.

As the three years of the grant period unfolded, failing to have a common vision at the onset began to affect the implementation of Build Peoria!, the Pew Partnership effort. The lack of community consensus became apparent when news coverage of the project stimulated a backlash against it. Some people complained that, in a shrinking economy, Build Peoria! rewarded people who had led lives of crime and alienation, at the expense of those who had played by the rules. Conflict over Build Peoria! had not-so-subtle racial overtones, with whites tending to object more to the program, whose participants were primarily black. In three years three different directors served the project. Whether these leadership changes resulted from the community's lack of alignment on the project or contributed to

it, the discontinuity in leadership certainly made it more difficult for the project to operate effectively.

Build Peoria!'s frustrating experience underscores the probability that civic change efforts which build on a foundation of existing work and aligned vision will have greater initial momentum. Aligning visions and connecting efforts take significant time, perhaps years. Experience in other Pew Partnership cities suggests that new habits and new relationships develop slowly, and rarely can be generated under the time pressures produced by grant applications and expectations of short-term results.

Concentrate on Communication

Most Partner groups channeled some of the initial excitement and enthusiasm about the new civic change opportunity toward longer-term investments in new people and new learning. At the same time, many Partners also took to heart the classic advice about showing some clear results early. A strong focus on communication and good relationships with local media helped Partner groups attend to both these first-stage needs in timely ways.

Partners sought and welcomed the media's assistance in expressing pride that a national foundation would invest in their cities, and they built on that pride to encourage citizen investment as well. Most Partner groups skillfully used the media and other forms of communication to demonstrate how their efforts connected to commonly shared interests in such deep-rooted causes as the well-being of young people, heritage, openness, or pride in place. The Partners enlisted media help in promoting new opportunities to participate in civic life and civic change. With consistent encouragement from the Pew Partnership national project office in Charlottesville, the Pew Partners cultivated relationships with people in their news media so that regular coverage could help make the Partner groups' efforts more real, credible, and meaningful to their fellow citizens.

When asked what helped the community understand the unusual nature of the civic change work in Rapid City, then Girls, Inc. Director Melanie Flatt, said:

> *We learned a lot about public relations. We really took advantage of the technical assistance Pew was willing to give us. That was sort of a turning point with the public, using our ability to communicate through the media. We were able to show what it looks like, how to do it, what has worked in other places.*

In Santa Fe, members of the Affordable Housing Roundtable nurtured relationships with several local reporters who covered the housing and local-economy beats. These community leaders regularly supplied information about housing issues, which one Santa Fe reporter praised as going beyond just "publicity for their own good works."

Eventually an affordable-housing project ran into opposition from a considerable number of local residents. Instead of simply reporting on the complaints or the conflict, the paper ran some background information and described the extent to which many native Santa Feans—lifelong, law-abiding, hard-working citizens—could no longer afford to stay in their family homes, the homes where they grew up. This kind of enriched coverage might not have occurred if the members of the Affordable Housing Roundtable had not regularly and carefully shared information with the reporters.

In Fargo/Moorhead, *The Forum* ran an extraordinary five-day series of front-page news stories about the Cultural Diversity Project's diversity-learning and -training efforts. Project Director

Yoke-Sim Gunaratne said, "The fact that it was 'front page' was important in two ways. It affirmed us in saying that what we were doing was really newsworthy, and it communicated a great deal of the specific substance of our work about different cultures in our midst. It was a great boost."

Beginning in the first stage, and continuing through the present, the Pew Partnership national project office invested substantial energy in communicating about all aspects of Partner efforts. The national project staff produced a significant number of publications, including research reports, a semi-annual newsletter/journal called *Civic Partners*, a series of "issue briefs," and a series of four widely requested volumes about leadership collaboration.

In addition, the project office provided encouragement and assistance for Partner groups committed to communicating about opportunities for engagement and, in later stages, results. When it hosted the Partner groups' regular semi-annual gatherings and as part of its standard services, the project office highlighted examples of communication products from different cities, offered expert training, and repeatedly underscored the importance of incorporating effective communication strategies into Partner groups' work.

This consistent focus on communication produced significant results. More than 500 stories about one or more of the Partner groups or about the Pew Partnership appeared in national media outlets, regional and local media, and trade journals.

While all these results unfolded over time, a significant number took place early on. In the first stage, the project office established its strategy of providing encouragement and assistance with communication, and made clear its expectations that each Partner group would focus on communication. These first-stage strategies set a long-term course of working with media partners to keep opportunities for participation open, and to let communities know the kinds of results the Partner groups created. The successes in communication helped make Partner efforts more tangible to citizens, and supported the first-stage work of connecting people, ideas, and opportunities.

For the first stage of getting started and getting going, the Partners' particular contribution to understanding how to accomplish civic change stemmed from their ways of handling the dilemma of pace. All Partner groups had agreed from the outset that, in addition to accomplishing change in a discrete area, they would concentrate on developing the capacity to invent and implement long-term change strategies. This joint focus on a discrete project, with equal weight given to long-term capacity for civic change, influenced the very first stages of most Partners' work. Partners knew that short-term projects may be accomplished by heroic one-time efforts, by small numbers of people, and by the usual group of active citizens. Long-term civic change—a change in the fundamental way citizens determine what kind of communities they will have—requires a sustained investment in practices that open the doors of opportunity to new citizens, new learning, and new forms of connection. Those practices provided the focus for Partner groups' work during Stage One.

STAGE 2 CARRYING OUT THE WORK

As Pew Partner groups grew beyond their getting-started phase, they began to carry out their discrete projects in ways that advanced their learning about how to accomplish civic change. In every city, projects featured new players, new connections, and new juxtapositions of issues and interests that had not been considered connected before. Cathy Jordan, then Executive Director of McLennan County Youth Collaboration, the parent organization of the Lighted Schools program in Waco, said:

> *At the time the Lighted Schools concept was emerging, there had never been a collaborative proposal developed by a group of partners in Waco (we had five originally; now there are 25), nor had there been genuine involvement of grassroots organizations in the planning of a major proposal. Involving individuals from the newly formed neighborhood associations dramatically changed who the participants were in planning a major project for the community. The involvement of the grassroots organizations in the site visit for the Pew Partnership was a first for most of the participants.*

The startup behind them, the Partner groups deepened and systematized their work, and discovered a new, mid-stage dilemma—the dilemma of focus.

THE DILEMMA OF FOCUS

The Partner groups succeeded in creating an open approach to working on something important to the community—a first-time experience in several of the cities. New people became involved in the Partner groups' work; those people began to believe the effort was authentic and that its key players were serious about valuing people's contributions to accomplishing significant new goals. New connections grew, too, between traditionally powerful people and those whose views and ideas had never been included before. The people involved in the projects had a deep interest in keeping the doors open, continuing to build the new allies, connections, and the unusual linkages that distinguish this effort from the usual good community project. The problem? All these different people, new and not so new, really do have different ideas. At first, just learning about each other's views created movement and progress. But after that, the projects began to sense a need to focus, to keep a diverse group of people motivated while agreeing on and carrying out a direction that might not be everyone's first choice.

The dilemma of focus comes into being because people involved in civic change know they need to do two conflicting things at the same time. They must stay open to new people and new ideas while also focusing enough—which means narrowing and choosing—so they can create significant change.

Behind this dilemma lies citizens' limited experience as people jointly responsible for community-change work. Citizens have little experience defining and solving community problems together. People lack experience with scoping out issues and determining which ones will require generations of work and which may yield to a short, enthusiastic publicity blitz. People hardly know enough to make wise decisions about what to address, or in what order. The structure and apparatus that would support habits of civic engagement have not been invented yet in most cities.

V O I C E S

If the outcomes are reasonably clear, then there will be some indicators of progress that will tell you if you are accomplishing what you set out to do, but in addition, you can watch and see who comes, who stays, who speaks up, who contributes, and so forth. It is not just about the problem-solving outcomes "out there." It is also about the process and quality of the relationships.

Michael Gilliard
Pine Bluff, Arkansas

The rate of community change adds to the dilemma of focus. Newly involved—even newly arrived—citizens may lack personal ties to each other and to citizens with more history of engagement. People have had neither time nor opportunities to understand each other's situations, develop trust, or cultivate a sense of shared responsibility and commitment. They do not have enough information or appropriate skills to make good decisions about taking on civic work that will bring mutual benefits to people with diverse interests. In this context, agreeing on a focus and sticking to it become particularly challenging.

The choices and decisions Partner groups made in response to the dilemma of focus reflect a move to a deeper, systemic level of action. The Partners turned to practices that increase citizens' abilities to take joint responsibility for civic change. These practices supported citizens in becoming more active, effective owners of their communities. The practices aimed to make it easier for people to understand and be interested in the things they hold in common. Partner groups worked to find names and descriptions for their work that many people would find both compelling and accessible. Partners worked against the usual tendencies to build new organizations that need high profiles to boost their fund-raising efforts. Instead, Partners sought ways to share power, add extra support to existing efforts, and give away credit. These and several other responsibility- and ownership-building practices helped address the second-stage dilemma of focus. Here are some examples of these practices.

THE PRACTICES

Give Common Ground a Name: Make the Core Vision Accessible

A motivating vision for civic change results when people work together to find answers to the question, "What kind of community do we want?" When people ask themselves and each other this question, they move toward taking responsibility for the work they know needs to be done. They relate to their communities' opportunities and challenges as active, invested owners.

Within minutes of meeting Joe Berney for the first time, everyone hears the same fact: In Eugene, Oregon, where Joe is President of Networking for Youth (NFY), people have discovered that more than 80 percent of young people in the United States get their first job or work experience through knowing an adult. The adult might be a parent, teacher, coach, relative, neighbor, or club leader—someone who takes a personal interest. As a result, people in Eugene decided that if they want young people to be engaged in the community, including getting on track for a viable career, the young people's first jobs matter. Eugene's young people need to know the kinds of people who will assist them in getting a valuable first job. So Networking for Youth supports pairing young people with mentors who have work experience and connections to jobs.

As is the case in other cities, Networking for Youth organizers found compelling ways to engage large numbers of citizens in answering the key civic change question: "What kind of community do we want?" This question asks for a reply in the form of a vision. The vision in Eugene, according to NFY President Joe Berney, is: "We want a community in which each young person, regardless of background, has a sense of hope, security, belongingness, and usefulness—and a big part of that is a job."

The Networking for Youth vision is simple: Make a difference in young people's futures as Eugene citizens by connecting them to adults who have access to economic opportunity. The vision of a better future for young people has power for people from many diverse backgrounds. It is a vision that evokes a kind of instant recognition, needing no translation: "Yes, that is how things work, and we can influence how things work for better outcomes for young people." The vision serves multiple self-interests. It is pragmatic, and it has a ready action component.

Networking for Youth has taken this core vision dramatically beyond its first expectations of making 200 matches between mentors and young people in three years. By the end of the three-year Pew Partnership grant period, more than 2,000 young people had benefited from mentoring relationships with adults in the Eugene and Springfield area. Responding fully to the Pew Partnership charge to treat the initial discrete project as a doorway to more extensive civic change, Networking for Youth both accomplished its original goal several times over, and created and discovered additional opportunities for visionary change. The basic vision kept unfolding, and continues unfolding today.

Early in 1998, Joe Berney said:

> *We have been dealing here in Eugene with a polarization between people supporting spending on a jail for young people and people supporting prevention. But even prevention is an idea that suggests kids are likely to turn into problems unless we intervene. Resiliency is a bigger vision. Resiliency is more than prevention. We have learned that the question of whether to prevent or intervene is not the right question. The question is, 'What will it take to build young people's resiliency and connection to community?'*

The people of Networking for Youth have concluded that one thing it will take is what Berney calls "leveraging other infrastructures." He says, "If you're an agent of change, you don't just want 200 mentors. You want those mentors to influence the places and systems they come from—labor, churches, work place—and engage all of those systems."

Building on its initial intention of fostering mentoring relationships, Networking for Youth is moving in multiple directions. Yet all its directions—the strategies—represent ways to act on the core

IN HER OWN WORDS

NICKI FAULDS from Eugene, Oregon, participated in Networking for Youth's mentoring program as a student. These remarks are edited from an address she made at the Lane County Youth Summit in September 1997.

I was asked about what my mentor has meant to me. And I really don't know where to begin. Last June I did something that I never really intended to do—I graduated from high school. I'm serious. I really had no intention, but she kept asking me, 'Why don't you stick with it; I mean, what harm can it do? You know it's not going to hurt you, and you might get something out of it.' And so, I thought, 'Okay fine, you know I'll just humor her,' and before I knew it I wore a cap and gown, and she stood out there and she watched me graduate. And that's the way it has always been since I met her.

I did lots of things. I smoked pot, had unprotected sex, and ran around with older men. She never criticized what I did, but she always asked me why. She always wanted a reason, an explanation for what I was doing. A lot of times I didn't know how to explain it, and that's what made me think about what I was doing, because I didn't have a good reason for doing what I did. It was just my way of acting out for my family problems and everything else that was going on.

She's always been just a friend to me. She has kind of helped guide me, but not forced me. Now I've got a friend for life. When I have children in the future, she's going to be there in the delivery room. When I graduate from college, she'll be there at the ceremony. I have a relationship that will never be taken from me, and that's something that I can never appreciate enough.

vision of young people growing up resilient, hopeful, capable, and with a sense of belonging.

The diverse efforts to leverage and link many infrastructures to accomplish this vision will continue. Networking for Youth, says Berney, is now building on community support systems that are already in place, and connecting their efforts to each other to nurture young people's resiliency.

Along with the expanding focus, the original focus on mentoring continues. The Network is now developing both regional and state mechanisms for coordinating and improving the quality of mentoring programs. People in Eugene and Springfield now speak with some confidence about reaching a goal of pairing every interested young person in the area with a mentor.

While Networking for Youth taps into a deeply shared interest in the future of young people, HandMade in America in Western North Carolina operates on a core vision that taps into a different source of common and multiple self-interests—pride in cultural heritage. The region once had a proud crafts tradition, that most people native to the area remember, and has sustained a recent influx of premier quality artisans and craftspeople. In responding to the core vision question, "What kind of community—or region—do we want?" people from the region articulated their vision in a way that has ready significance for their citizens: "We want a community known nationwide and worldwide for the quality of our handmade products and for our pride in those products and the people who produce them."

The originators of HandMade in America recognized that conditions were right to "revalue" the crafts tradition and use that tradition as a central source of meaning and power around which many people from diverse perspectives in Western North Carolina could organize for sustainable community

development. This vision is one that many people from diverse backgrounds understand and one that excites them. The simplest statement of the vision is that people around the country—and the world—will think of Western North Carolina as the "center for 'handmade' in the United States." This vision is dynamic enough, so far, to support successful new initiatives in education, business, tourism, economic development, cultural heritage, and sustainable community development.

VOICES

People seemed very passive. We needed to educate grassroots people to organize and have the idea they are in charge. After we became an Enterprise community, people learned they had to do it themselves. The neighborhoods learned that nobody will come in and tell them what to do.

Cathy Jordan
Waco, Texas

The Pew Partnership offered a particular challenge to those developing a shared vision in Rapid City when it funded two projects under one grant and asked them to cooperate. After a sometimes difficult period during which the people in the two projects formed ways of working together, Melanie Flatt, then Director of Girls, Inc., in Rapid City, said:

> *One breakthrough for us in understanding civic change came when the Civic Change Advisory Board got to a single vision, a vision they developed as a group. That is not what it started out to be. It was very divided. People came to our Civic Change Advisory Board with very specific things that they as individuals wanted to do. Some may have even said, "I'm not going to be involved if I can't do this." There was a breakthrough when people realized that we weren't going to get anywhere unless we all agreed on a single vision and worked toward it.*

Bruce Long Fox, Executive Director of Rural America Initiatives in Rapid City, described the importance of shared vision from his perspective:

> *What determines success is the shared vision of the group. The vision has to be wide enough to catch the energy of the community. If this is too limited, as with a service mission, it won't fly, it won't support real civic change. Initially, our mission was to increase access for "at-risk youth." It was simply too limited, too safe. Too ho-hum. This earlier, narrow vision didn't work. It didn't carry any weight, convey a sense of value. It didn't motivate.*
>
> *The Coalition [to end violence] that we have now would say it is committed to creating a community that is safe and good for all of us, especially children and youth. We want to grow a community and a spirit of community. We want to be worthy of that spirit. Now, I would say we have a vision wide enough to include everyone and deep enough to be important, and worthy of our hard work.*

In the City of Danville and Pittsylvania County, people involved in Southern Virginia 2000 (SV2000) named city-county cooperation as their specific approach for working toward their vision of common ground. Before SV2000 became a Pew Partner, according to Project Coordinator Nettie Simon-Owens, "People had had the issue of civic and regional cooperation on their minds for a long time but didn't know how to do it." Ray Griffin, Danville City Manager, elaborated: "There was a traditional disharmony

between the City and the County. Once we became Pew Partners, the Southern Virginia 2000 board was very clear about the goal of seeing City and County work together. In this they were being visionary and 'counter-cultural'."

This stated vision of city-county collaboration, though difficult to achieve, made sense to people in the region and helped people to understand the purpose of Southern Virginia 2000.

In Pew Partnership cities, Partner groups have encouraged citizen ownership and responsibility by inviting citizens to address the question of what kind of community they want. Citizens have worked together to give common ground and shared vision a name. Partner groups found ways to build on motivating, unifying, accessible visions without damaging the diverse perspectives of people in their regions.

V O I C E S

There is a kind of working knowledge that civic change takes. It is practical, and it is political. But it is also personal. I think I learned a lot about this through this work.

Mike Loftin
Santa Fe, New Mexico

Avoid Empire Building: Share Credit and Share Power

Becky Anderson, Executive Director of HandMade in America in Western North Carolina, describes one of the key operating principles for HandMade: "Everything we do, particularly grant applications, we do through partners. HandMade is not intended to be a big organization in its own right."

For example, HandMade applied to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and received one of ten Environmental Sustainability Demonstration grants awarded in the United States. HandMade's partner in this grant was the North Carolina Arboretum. The Arboretum created craft gardens filled with plants for making paper, baskets, brooms, and natural dyes. Becky Anderson said:

> *We made the case to the EPA that the first rule of a sustainable economy is that you are the provider of your own raw resources, including raw materials. Our craft community had begun purchasing dyes and broom corn from Mexico and China because of availability and cost. Some of our materials were becoming extinct because of pressures on our rivers from recreation and kayaking. Broom corn has to be harvested by hand, so that's a cost. We've been studying the amounts of these plants that are needed for various purposes. We learned that a single broom maker will use a ton of broom corn a year, and it's an easy crop to grow. We wanted to grow the craft gardens to see if we could supply, in our region, raw materials to our own crafts workers.*

Underscoring the commitment to partnership that is one of HandMade's primary guiding principles, Anderson said, "The Arboretum completely administered that grant. We at HandMade didn't keep a dime."

This experience built on a partner relationship that was already established. The Arboretum had planted its annual flower gardens in quilt patterns, which visitors could view from areas high above

the garden beds themselves. HandMade had then included these "quilt gardens" as a recommended stop in *The Craft Heritage Trails of Western North Carolina* guidebook.

As HandMade in America has become more and more successful in attracting grant money to Western North Carolina for its sustainable development efforts, it has consistently ensured that its partners have held the limelight. This attention has increased the partners' sense of responsibility and active ownership in the revitalization effort.

In choosing to share credit and share power, HandMade in America and other Pew Partnership efforts moved beyond traditional types of positive program-building efforts. Instead of setting in motion the turf problems that sometimes plague successful community efforts, these Pew Partner groups largely avoided turfism through building a framework of partnership and shared ownership within which mutual trust could flourish.

Move From Institutional Standards of Progress to Community Measuring Sticks

As implementation progressed, some of the Pew Partner groups began making a distinction between institutional and community ways of measuring progress and success. These groups began using their own standards to measure their efforts. Some groups began to view institutional measures as helpful and necessary, but not sufficiently reflective of the whole picture of complex community change. Michael Gilliard, Youth Coordinator of Partners for a Better Pine Bluff, said:

> *Lots of times groups will try to use hard statistics about community conditions and change—I know we did—but they can be so vague. You must use smaller things, like the number of kids who feel comfortable in the group, the number you know are off the streets who were in trouble last year, the frequency with which you are reaching outside your own comfort zone. The indicators may vary by person and by project, but the key ones will not be the statistics or numbers, per se, but the other kinds of things.*

For example, during the grant period some crime statistics went up in Pine Bluff. Using institutional measures, many observers might take this increase as suggesting that things were getting worse everywhere and the work was failing. But Partners for a Better Pine Bluff knew that crime in certain areas of the city was actually falling, while overall rates were still rising.

With its growing knowledge of specific areas and with cooperation from the police, Partners for a Better Pine Bluff was able to develop some community-by-community measures that detected progress. This communicated a sense of accomplishment, and gave participants a feeling of trust that their good efforts would actually be recognized. Perhaps more important, these new understandings suggested that citizens and local officials could benefit when working on the same side, and should keep doing so.

In Rapid City, in order to make progress toward reducing the 52-percent high school dropout rate among young Native American men, the ATEYAPI (or fatherhood) Society worked with several schools to bring Lakota adults into classrooms. This effort provided essential cultural mentors to adolescents facing an extraordinary set of difficulties in developing and maintaining self-worth, a sense of belonging, a capacity to accept responsibility, and a sense of purpose.

Bringing Lakota adults into schools challenged some of the schools' customary practices. It cut down on the frequency of subtle judgmental messages that young people routinely received, and it altered the way teachers and administrators managed their own time. In order to succeed, the adult visitors sometimes needed more time than the fixed amounts available in the schools' or teachers' daily work plans. The visitors sometimes brought additional people or ceremonial items with them, providing more value to the students, but challenging the typically rigid time boundaries within which the schools functioned. Ultimately the schools learned to adjust their institutional management practices in order to accommodate this valuable addition to the students' learning.

Bruce Long Fox, the project leader, sums up these experiences by saying, "Simply putting some brown faces in those classrooms changes the dynamics of what happens." The most recent figures for Central High School show that the Native American male dropout rate has fallen from 52 percent to 22 percent. The school principal has given much of the credit for this dramatic improvement to ATEYAPI.

Recently it became clear that others are taking note of the results that stem from using community standards to address progress. The ATEYAPI mentoring project is the 1998 recipient of the Human and Civil Rights Award from the National Educational Association. This national recognition followed a similar state-level honor conferred by the South Dakota Education Association in August 1997.

Not all Partner groups have yet received such high honors. Nonetheless, many persist in using their own standards when measuring progress, even when that requires reading the results in ways that differ from traditional institutional measurements. Developing and using community standards have increased people's sense of responsibility for civic change work in some Partnership communities.

Celebrate Early Progress

As they became established and gained confidence, most Partner groups attached increased significance to those events and changes that had meaning within the local context and history. As the local impact of specific changes became clear, most Partner groups took the occasion to highlight and celebrate early signs of progress and new opportunities for participation.

In Longview, one early neighborhood success meant a great deal to the citizens working to reclaim their community. After many efforts, and with the support of the Longview Community Partnership and the police, citizens were able to amass the clout needed to force a landlord to end the drug business in his house. People claimed that first victory as a significant interim milestone on their way to learning what citizens and paid staff can do together to restore communities to health. Significantly, people in Longview viewed this victory as vital and empowering, but not as a final accomplishment. They referred to it and celebrated it often, as a way of generating continued and expanded energy for the work yet to be done. Then they continued working.

More milestones appeared. Gradually, citizens found the allies to have the building razed, and a new community center has now been erected on the former problem spot. It happened in stages, said Alice Day, Program Manager for the Longview Community Partnership:

> *First the building was closed. Then it was razed. The Stamper Park Neighborhood Association, which was the first one the Longview Community Partnership helped organize on Longview's south side, became a 501(c)(3) nonprofit. Now we have built a new building, the Stamper Park Community Resource Center, on the same site. And*

IN HER OWN WORDS

EVELYN JORDAN of Waco, Texas, is a case manager at the La Vega Primary Center. When the McLennan County Youth Collaboration began the project, Ms. Jordan was a nurse at G.L. Wiley Middle School, a Lighted Schools program site.

I heard about the Lighted Schools project at Wiley School in 1993 when I was a school nurse. I heard people talking, but didn't know much about it, but then it became a reality. When I first saw the potential, I believed it would work and would take a load off me as the school nurse, so I got involved. I referred medical cases where the child needed more medical attention than I could give.

What a tremendous change. Something was being done in a short time. Before that everything had taken a long time. I felt a tremendous relief.

Some families don't follow up. When you see families following through, these successes make up for those who don't. If a parent really wants help, we find something. Often they want a quick fix. We encourage them not to give up. Some are embarrassed. Some have other basic needs. The emotional needs are the least of their worries. Food, housing, and clothes are priorities.

I learned as a case manager that sometimes when looking at a family, I would have an attitude, but I realized that you don't know why they are in the shape they are in. It caused me to watch my attitude and not be so judgmental. I love it when parents prove me wrong. You begin to see all the reasons why people don't get the help they need.

I learned that I have to develop a relationship first. Once I develop a relationship, I am able to get the family to cooperate. I wasn't a snoop, and I gained their trust. I needed to be reminded of my own background. I see myself that I have gone through the same things.

Coordination of resources has happened, and we need to strengthen that process. Looking back, I wish I had tried to seek more resources, known where I could get more resources, tried to know the community in order to know what is available. Sometimes I went around in circles. I felt, too, that I could have been more insightful in knowing which families were not using the resources well. I would ask myself, "Are they looking for a quick fix, or do they want to change?" It will take more involvement from the community to make it successful. We need to convince more businesses to be involved. Also families need to become more independent.

When there is a cry, you have to know that you can't fix everything. You have to be more keen in knowing those who would really benefit in the long term. What is most important to me is seeing the behavior of children change and seeing how the fourth and fifth graders who are now in the eighth grade have better attitudes; abusive families changed and the home life changed for the better for children; parents getting a job. Being a part of this organization and seeing things happen, I feel I've made a difference.

we celebrated at each stage.

The community has plenty to celebrate. This used to be a corner that people would stay away from. There were shootings there, and other kinds of criminal activity, including drug use and sales. To have it become a safe place where neighborhood associations and other groups meet, and the Community Police Officer on that beat is housed ... it's a significant, symbolic change.

A seasoned veteran of civic change work, Day cautions that celebrating progress needs to be done thoughtfully. "It's kind of tricky, but it's important. Tricky because we don't want people to be sucked into the idea that one little program is where change is going to take place. We don't want people to think things are coming to an end."

Welcome the Personal Side of People's Gifts and Put All Gifts to Work

Most Partner groups created some initiative that engaged people directly, inviting them to share their skills and experiences with people they had not known before. Partner organizations' staff members excelled at seeing the gifts in people and finding ways for them to put those gifts to work.

In Albany, staff at the Albany/Dougherty Community Partnership for Education fostered mentoring programs and eventually provided training for all the existing mentoring programs in the area. As with other Partner groups, the Albany Partners learned from the outset to look for needs and find gifts to match the needs. This approach guided the Community Partnership's response when a massive flood hit Albany shortly after the city became part of the Pew Partnership. Staff members altered their plans on the spot, pitching in personally to help clean up. Staff found funding for new youth work programs, and launched the 2000 Friends mentoring program to equip adults to provide young people and families affected by the flood with information, support, and links to food, clothing, and medical attention. Because of the way it responded to the flood, the Albany/Dougherty Community Partnership established new, stronger relationships with many parts of the community, including the Juvenile Court system and the area's churches. The Juvenile Court system asked the Community Partnership to create the 2000 Friends mentoring program so that the courts could refer young people to it. Executive Director Jo Granberry said:

> *A lot of what we do today began as a result of that flood. Before the flood the churches in this community had never been as involved with serving the needs of anyone other than their own members. During the aftermath of the flood, the churches opened their doors. They served as supply houses, shelters, and suppliers of food. And after the flood work was over, those doors have stayed open. We recently brought nationally renowned trainers in to train two people each from a number of churches so that they could do parenting training. Georgia state law requires that people under 20 who receive any kind of assistance must attend parenting training. Of course the people don't want to. Being able to go to the training in a church instead of at a government office makes a big difference. The trust is so much greater. These churches have provided classes in multi-ethnic parenting and*

VOICES

Between process and action people there is real tension. Recognize it. Value both. Give everyone something to do, something that satisfies.

Bruce Long Fox
Rapid City, South Dakota

fatherhood for more than 1,200 families through this partnership that began in the flood.

As the work of the Albany Dougherty Community Partnership became established, staff members realized that many of the youth also needed close ties to successful, capable men and women. Responding to a juvenile judge's request that the Partnership work with court-mandated youth and their parents, Carolyn Mansfield, Friends Mentoring Program Director for the Community Partnership, created "25 Men," a special group of adult men who could commit to more intensive relationships with particularly challenging boys. One by one, Mansfield recruited the men, convincing each in turn that he had gifts to offer the young men in the program.

During one site visit, members of the research team watched with amusement and appreciation as Mansfield skillfully interviewed a stranger who happened to be seated next to her at dinner. As she learned about him and his background, his connections to others in the group of 25 Men, and his progress towards establishing his own private transportation company within the next year, she pressed him to begin the process of joining the group. She saw gifts in him, as she had in other men, that he might undervalue. She pointed out those gifts and made clear suggestions about how he could put his gifts to work in a rewarding way.

In Rapid City, the ATEYAPI cultural mentoring program for adolescent males had similar aims and a similar reliance on personal gifts. Bruce Long Fox, Executive Director of Rural America Initiatives, said:

> *There is immense value in the gift of having young men get to know older men who have figured out their identities, despite facing many of the challenges the young men currently feel are insurmountable. This idea of gifts was not part of our training at ATEYAPI. But it turned out to be central. It was in the people who came to do the work at the schools. It was in their experience. It was the gift of their quiet self-acceptance.*

Most Partner groups worked to discover and put to use the special talents and skills of newly engaged citizens. Throughout the Partner communities, people are familiar with the principle that "people support what they create." The practice of finding people's gifts and putting those gifts to work is one reliable approach to increasing citizens' sense of responsibility and capability for accomplishing civic change.

Develop and Use Civic Manners

The combination of several of these elements represented, in effect, the discovery of what might be called civic manners. People in the Partner groups began developing ways of getting work done, and ways of treating each other, that increased their chances for both enjoyment and success. For example, people developed ways to learn about and respect one another, to introduce practices that both welcome newcomers and still get work done, and to deal with differences when they do arise.

People in Partner groups described new learning about how much of the core work of civic change takes place through informal means, outside formal gatherings. People spoke about how the tone of phone calls or chance meetings became warmer and more connected, and how this greater connection improved the possibilities for progress. Most of the groups developed norms that helped people

IN HER OWN WORDS

TERESA MERRIWEATHER-OROK of Albany, Georgia, is Assistant Professor of Public Administration, Albany State University.

Janice Allen-Jackson (Albany City Manager) and I had worked with high school students in the summer and introduced them to public-service careers. This [Pew Partnership] was an opportunity to expand what we had been doing. The building stage of the program was the most critical. The process of involving the community from the onset of the program had tremendous implications. There were several community boards established to guide the project. Albany State University [ASU] had its Board to guide the direction of the youth employment training program. Additionally, many resource persons provided technical support to the project.

During the first year of the project, we overcame many hurdles. First, ASU was in the throes of dealing with negative publicity concerning its management of the institution. Such negative publicity nearly divided the community, with some groups having strong support for the institution and others advocating for the merger of the institution with a neighboring two-year college. With the varying perceptions of the institution, we were not quite sure if the community would be able to separate itself from dealing with the dilemmas of organizational change to address the real issue, that being the needs of at-risk youth. We were able to bridge these gaps and witnessed a good show of participation from local businesses. When the 1994 flood happened, many other agencies and businesses were flooded, and kids were reassigned to other agencies to provide flood-relief efforts. With Pew money, we shuffled kids into temporary sites, including the Red Cross, high schools, and churches that were used as relief sites.

During the second year we involved more agencies and organizations. The kids were more diverse—socioeconomically, culturally, [and in terms of] disability and gender. We started leadership seminars and other activities, and built a reputation for the program.

I knew from the beginning that I needed to focus on community collaboration, so early on I pulled in area boards, businesses, and built a base of community support. Some helped to get placement sites, some served on the banquet committee, and some interviewed kids. Typically we had 25-35 adults doing the interviews for 200 kids. This project has served as a cornerstone for community collaboration, not just an Albany State program.

Federal agencies and legislative offices, small businesses, and parents have come to the Albany State campus because of the project. It has been wonderful. The kids feel like they belong to a sorority or fraternity. Less than two percent have been adjudicated since they have been involved. It builds self-esteem. Many students have gone on to college and technical school.

The most enlightening insight has been that in just a short summer and a series of activities in the fall, we have truly made a difference in the lives of these children. Many have been labeled as never amounting to anything, but when placed on a level playing field, they produce. Many of them come from households where there is a lot of emotional upheaval and dysfunction, but when someone opens their arms to them, they are very functional. They are hearing a different song.

remember their new civic manners, reflected in statements like these: "Keep everyone in the loop," "Don't embarrass one another," and "Build the group, not the individual."

Partner groups reported how satisfying, even invigorating, it can be to find comfort and familiarity in these informal arenas. Understanding one another's worlds seems to take some of the tension out of previously difficult or nonexistent relationships between groups. After understanding develops, common courtesy and mutual respect come more easily.

Good civic manners are closely linked with workable, effective ways of getting work done. Many Partner groups developed another practical form of civic manners in the realm of their meetings and how they managed them. Partner groups typically consisted of unusually busy people, and most groups developed strategies for respecting members' time by holding tightly organized, carefully conducted meetings.

In Albany, Brady Keys, co-chairman of the 36-member Albany/Dougherty Community Partnership for Education, says the group's regular meetings have never exceeded one hour. The agenda requires board members to know one of the project's six goals in depth, and to present succinct reports at each monthly meeting. Agendas for the meetings are divided into increments as small as two minutes each, and co-chairman Keys enforces the time limits. While this degree of structure and brevity is not appropriate for every situation, the board members in Albany do the necessary preparation and homework between meetings that make the format successful for them. In doing so, they demonstrate a high level of respect for each other and for the work they are addressing together.

The staff members for the Albany/Dougherty Community Partnership for Education have created other meeting tools that underscore the value of the time people commit to this civic effort. After each board meeting, people complete a three-item "Meeting Assessment Tool." The half-sheet form invites people to rate the meeting on these dimensions: "Wonderful/Lousy," "Very focused/Rambling," and "Energetic/Lethargic."

VOICES

What leadership is about is learning to capitalize on whatever is going on at the moment, and to capitalize on the gift that every person has to bring to the effort.

Alice Day
Longview, Texas

In other meetings associated with Albany/Dougherty Community Partnership for Education, staff members provide a fill-in-the-blanks form so group participants can easily write their own minutes. The 25 Men, for example, keep minutes of each meeting so they will have a record of their decisions about their activities with their young proteges. They see the minutes as a sign of their own seriousness and credibility. The fill-in-the-blanks form for recording meeting minutes makes it easy for the 25 Men to do something they value for the health of their group.

As people in civic change work attend to the quality of meetings in all these small ways, they underscore some key aspects of civic manners. People see that their gifts of time and ideas are treated with respect and handled with significant care and advance planning.

Practice Tuckpointing—Careful, Necessary, Skilled Renewal for Groups

Tuckpointing, the painstaking work that keeps the mortar in brick structures in good repair, seems an appropriate way of describing essential group renewal during implementation. Tuckpointing involves keeping things together, or repairing them by adding new elements, without either damaging the existing structure or drawing too much attention to what is new.

This quiet kind of behind-the-scenes work is critically important to the processes of civic change. In practice, it means that if new or different people come on the scene after the work is well underway, people in the established group still take active steps to welcome the newcomers and support them in their learning. This responds to the feelings of discomfort newcomers often experience, based on their need to learn how to operate in a situation that already has implicit rules in place.

Most Pew Partner groups found ways to encourage latecomers to contribute, rather than insisting that they simply catch up with what was already in motion. One of the ways Partner groups kept incorporating new people was by finding out what the newcomers wanted and needed, rather than simply assigning them tasks based on ongoing work. When four small towns approached HandMade in America with a request for assistance with their Main Streets, the people at HandMade responded with interest and help, even though this project had not been part of the initial HandMade strategy. These towns each wanted to develop attractions that could be included in *The Craft Heritage Trails of Western North Carolina* guidebook, so that they could boost their local economies.

HandMade invited representatives from the towns to meet together every six weeks and encouraged each town to choose a somewhat larger town as a mentor. In the two and a half years since this effort started, HandMade's Executive Director Becky Anderson notes that not one town has ever missed a meeting. Bakersville, one of the participating towns, will have 11 entries in the second edition of *The Craft Heritage Trails of Western North Carolina*, after having none in the first edition.

Now new small towns in Western North Carolina and beyond will be joining the effort to learn and practice sustainable development.

VOICES

Everybody had a different definition at the beginning. They understood citizenship, but only for people with clout. They could understand the concept of social capital and that children are our future and that they are our capital. The view of social capital expanded to include everyone. Now people use the concept of civic change. They see that everyone needs to be involved as a citizen. Civic change involves the whole community in solving problems and making new opportunities.

Kim Barber Tieman
Charleston, West Virginia

HandMade has formed partnerships with the North Carolina Institute of Government and the State of North Carolina's Department of Commerce aimed at training small towns—much too small to have employees such as city managers—to serve as their own project managers for community-improvement work. In a learning-by-doing approach, people in each participating town will choose a major project. Over time, they will be coached through the steps of planning and implementing that project themselves.

As it deepens its understanding of successful hands-on community- and sustainable-development

approaches, HandMade has begun to bring its Western North Carolina expertise to the rest of the state and to surrounding states. All of these important additions to HandMade's initial repertoire of strategies derive from the tuckpointing approach—stay open to new people, ideas, and interests, even while continuing forward with initial strategies.

In several of the Pew Partnership communities, evidence of success and change captured unengaged people's attention. A sense that a Partner group was generating real change provided the catalyst that drew an increasing stream of new people into some communities' efforts.

In Waco, successful Lighted Schools sites drew public attention, and more school communities asked to be included in the projects. Five middle schools now participate in a project that began with one.

In Charleston, West Virginia, new people joined the Community Council of Kanawha Valley when they saw how the activities of Charleston's first school-based Family Resource Center improved at-risk children's test scores and brought other benefits. For example, the Family Resource Centers now partner with the West Side Business Association toward a variety of productive shared goals, including mentoring youth, creating a Neighborhood Watch, offering computer courses, and generating support for school levies.

Finally, some people in Pew Partner groups simply have a knack for welcoming new people into productive roles in ongoing work. These people can often be seen talking informally with newcomers, checking with them before and after a meeting, or during breaks, and thinking carefully about roles for them in the effort. These welcoming people go out of their way to give newcomers a chance to ask questions and challenge some of the "givens." Even when the formal process is not affirming to new people, these informal welcoming and encouraging behaviors can help latecomers find their way into productive participation in civic change efforts and can increase their sense of ownership of the work.

Develop and Use a Common Language

In those cities where Partner groups reported a sense of momentum and enthusiasm about their public work, often people had developed some common language or frequently used "watchwords" to describe their mission, accomplishments, ways of working, and even their challenges. Partners often used this purposeful language to convey a sense of real ownership. In Longview and Tyler, people spoke often about "developing our people." In Western North Carolina, people talked about "revaluing the crafts worker." In Charleston, South Carolina, people wove the phrase "youth as assets" into conversations. As the years of the Pew Partnership unfolded, Partners learned how to increase the synergy around their initial projects, and people began talking more and more confidently about "civic change" and "social capital."

People involved with the Lighted Schools project in Waco developed an oft-repeated "litany" to help everyone stay focused: "school attendance, grades, test scores, behavior." The Waco partners also heeded a watchword intended to help them remember to behave in new ways: "Changing the way we all do business."

People in Pew Partnership efforts typically spoke in terms of "we" and "our" rather than "I" and "my." They became increasingly better at speaking intentionally in terms of their visions and their activities. They learned to convey a great deal of meaning in short, illustrative stories. This intentional,

strategic use of inclusive, clear language helped to bring in new people, increase ownership, keep groups clearly focused, and speed their progress to the next level.

Create Public Spaces and Forums

As they learned new ways to do civic change work, Partner groups often developed and relied on public spaces for open dialogue and decision making. The Albany/Dougherty Community Partnership for Education was one of several Partner groups that used public spaces and forums, as it began its work, and at several points after implementation was underway. The first forums took place in schools, and introduced citizens to the six national educational goals the Community Partnership had decided to adopt. Organizers invited citizens to suggest ways to work toward each goal's success in their own community and invited everyone present to join one of the six citizen task forces set up to address each goal. The Community Partnership used open community meetings again at key points to provide updates on progress toward the goals and to invite suggestions for changes in strategies.

Several of the other Partner groups also relied on public meetings for maintaining clear ties to a broad base of citizens. People experimented with appropriate time frames, themes, formats, and frequencies for these demanding public forms of work.

Rob Kerr, a member of the board of the Charleston Civic Forum in Charleston, South Carolina, said:

> *One of the things we are continuing to do, the one that emanates directly from the grant and the Civic Forum, is that we are trying to position ourselves to be that unbiased neutral place to come and talk about important community issues, issues of the day.*

It takes some time for a community to learn the value of neutral public spaces. Once the value is known, people want to conduct their civic business in well-managed public spaces. Rob Kerr described an example of what can happen after an organization or group becomes known for its ability to be a neutral convener: "The local school board said, 'If you want to have a meaningful discussion about local public schools, we can't be the ones to hold that conversation. You need a neutral body.' So they came to us."

Several Partner groups, including those in Waco; Fargo/Moorhead; Pine Bluff; Eugene; Charleston, South Carolina; and Charleston, West Virginia, held successful Youth Summits in 1997. These large public events helped advance project goals, engage new people, boost the energy of those currently involved, and link these communities to the larger national effort highlighted in the Philadelphia Summit, "America's Promise," held in the summer of 1997.

In Rapid City and in Fargo/Moorhead, the Pew Partner groups served to accelerate opportunities for disconnected or alienated groups to gather. These projects created informal "public space" by making ongoing opportunities for people at all levels in the community to "come as they are" and bring their distinctiveness and cultural roots with them.

In an age dominated by electronic media, reduced disposable time, and growing cynicism about politics as usual, public forums are typically not in good shape. For most areas in the United States, "public spaces," even traditional town meetings, are rarities. In spite of these negative conditions, several of the Pew Partner groups began establishing public spaces for accomplishing civic work in their communities.

These advances in creating workable public space are part of the pattern that emerged from all the practices Partner groups developed during their second stage of development. Partner groups typically addressed the second-stage dilemma of focus by creating many engaging structures and opportunities to draw citizens directly into civic work, so that they became both more experienced and more committed to community change. Partners invested heavily in these work approaches because they both accomplish project aims and increase citizens' sense of responsibility and ownership for the project and other civic change work.

V O I C E S

VISION:

Growing a spirit of community.

MISSION:

As caring people, it is our mission to empower the community to reclaim our communities from violence, restoring them as safe places to live and raise families.

VALUES:

trustworthiness

respect

responsibility

fairness

caring

citizenship/generosity

decision making/courage

cooperation

honoring youth

honoring elders

Guiding Statements from S.A.V.E.
Rapid City, South Dakota

STAGE 3 PRODUCING RESULTS

As described in Section One, by many measures, the Partner groups produced results. Beyond these tangible, quantifiable outcomes, early evidence suggests another kind of result: significant change in many of these communities in such qualitative factors as pride; aspiration level for the community and its citizens; openness to a broad spectrum of people; opportunities for candid, productive public dialogue; increases in productive leadership practices; and a commitment to implementing genuinely collaborative change strategies.

For example, in Danville, Southern Virginia 2000 took a collaborative approach to making it possible, in the words of Danville City Manager Ray Griffin, to "unify job training to help build the economy, serve employers, and save people." The example of collaboration that SV2000 set then began to produce more results. Gregory Reid, Danville's Economic Development Director, said, "The SV2000 governance structure was a first. Now the Southern Virginia Economic Development Partnership is working on regional marketing. We're testing the water, helping people see that collaboration is safe."

Danville Community College President Carlyle Ramsey said:

> *We are moving from 'fractious competition' between City and County to a new spirit of regionalism, as shown by the creation of a new Small Business Development Center for Danville-Pittsylvania County. Before the Pew Partnership, it was rare to have explicit conversations about race; now progress on race issues is explicitly mentioned in our regional vision. Before, we used to 'dance around' the union issue; now we are actively looking for common ground between the business and union sectors. The Pew Partnership has given us an element of confidence that has enabled us to look at things differently. Through the project we are moving from false pride to a spirit of self-assessment.*

In Eugene, results include an impressive expansion in citizens' and organizations' participation in change efforts. Three school districts initially participated in Networking for Youth's mentoring efforts. Now 16 school districts are involved. Initial efforts included two municipalities, Eugene and Springfield. Lane County Commissioners now participate actively as well. The recent youth summit attracted two percent of the entire County population, with delegations from 300 organizations participating.

Once results like these began to manifest in the 14 cities, new challenges emerged. Both the few funded staff people in the projects and the active civic volunteers wondered how to deal with the dilemma of commitment.

THE DILEMMA OF COMMITMENT

The projects are underway. Results are appearing. But the most active people are beginning to feel that there is no end to this. Instead of abating, the work expands continually, with new opportunities arriving faster than they can be addressed. With three years of funding and 20 years of expectations, how do people find the energy and resources to keep working at the deep, complex level required for real community change? Do they take time to reflect, to absorb what they are learning, even just to rest? If they do, they fear the fragile momentum they have established will surely suffer.

In most of the 14 cities, Partner groups addressed the dilemma of commitment by reinforcing the close fit between community interests and self interests. Partners found ways to underscore the personal benefits of continuing commitment to civic change, emphasizing that ongoing investment in community work can rejuvenate and re-energize individuals while also producing community improvements. Some of the practices Partner groups used to address the dilemma of commitment are presented below.

THE PRACTICES

Encourage Reflective Talk

People in civic change efforts give each other a boost when they gather and talk about the meaning of the project or activity they are doing together. When people involved with HandMade in America gathered with a member of the research team to report on their efforts, they noted how much they enjoy just talking things through with each other, and how that keeps their commitment strong. Executive Director Becky Anderson said, "Talking is our link with our heritage and culture. We are a region of storytellers. This is very reflective of our region as a people. We have always been storytellers. It's what we do best."

Mike Loftin, Executive Director of Neighborhood Housing Services of Santa Fe, commented on the importance of reflective talk in making wise choices about strategies:

> *Be sure you understand the problem before you offer the solution. Lots of the time people start throwing around solutions that really don't fit the situation here. They put off people and divide everything into sides. Solutions polarize if offered too early. They should emerge, with more support, out of good, solid discussion and knowledge of the local situation.*

Through productive conversation, people provide meaning for each other, help make sense of what is happening, and add to their own sense of an initiative's value. When the push to produce results has begun to yield success, talking together about the significance of what is happening can provide people with personal reasons for continuing their work on civic change.

Make the Experience of Community More Tangible

Using funds from the Pew Partnership, Longview and Tyler initiated cultural festivals that engaged multiple racial and ethnic communities by presenting their performers and artists to crowds

consisting of people from all backgrounds. These festivals provided diverse groups with an opportunity to function as one community and made more tangible the idea of Longview and Tyler as a region with an increasingly diverse population.

Ron Gleason, then President of the New East Texas Foundation, said of these festivals, "We thought it was important to show the indigenous culture had a lot to offer." David Galloway, a minister who served on the board of the Pew Partner group in Longview and Tyler, said:

> *The community festivals gave us an opportunity to come together in an informal way and a festive way to celebrate the uniqueness of our region. There was something about that kind of art, the kind of music, that almost gave us permission or a kind of license to interact in a way that otherwise we might be a little reticent to explore [with] one another. But I would see African-Americans, Hispanics, Anglos—all the folks—come together and talk. That's a rarity in our society these days, that real down-and-dirty dialogue that occurs when real people get together and talk about things they care about.*

VOICES

The Cultural Diversity Project provided a forum for community leaders and volunteers from diverse ethnic backgrounds to share and work together. It gave a "voice" to ethnic groups to participate and contribute to community development and change.

Yoke-Sim Gunaratne
Fargo, North Dakota/Moorhead, Minnesota

In Charleston, West Virginia, the staff of the Family Resource Centers, funded by the Pew Partnership, produced a video describing the program and its mission to the community. For citizens there, the video helped make more concrete and vivid the idea of Charleston as a community that cares for its children and is committed to finding more and better ways to support people who care for and work with children.

Partner groups in five cities produced and distributed major newspaper inserts profiling their efforts, which helped the communities see and understand themselves in deeper ways. The cities that produced the inserts are Albany; Western North Carolina; Charleston, South Carolina; Charleston, West Virginia; and Waco. HandMade in America Executive Director Becky Anderson said of this strategy:

> *Every newspaper in Western North Carolina ran this insert. We knew people had been confused about HandMade. Some thought we were a crafts store. HandMade can seem almost too complex to explain, so we made this insert accessible to anybody. This was one of the best things we did in terms of public relations.*

During the week that includes Columbus Day, the Cultural Diversity Project in Fargo/Moorhead sponsored a "Cultural Diversity Week" in the second and third years of the project. The festivities included cultural exhibits, ethnic food, and a variety show. As a result of this and many other activities, Cultural Diversity Project Director Yoke-Sim Gunaratne said, "Mayors and community leaders have publicly supported the value of diversity. That was not heard of several years ago."

These are a few of the festivals, stories, videos, and other methods the cities used to refine their

descriptions of their civic change efforts. Each of these approaches to meaningful communication shone a floodlight on a positive, strong aspect of the featured community. This kind of attention makes the idea or concept of community itself more tangible, vivid, and concrete for citizens, and helps sustain commitment.

Nurture Positive Linkages Between Institutions and Communities

As they produced results, all Partner groups began to create more positive linkages with institutions. The Community Council of Kanawha Valley in Charleston, West Virginia, produced steady improvements in its relationships with the school system where the Family Resource Centers are located. In addition to many other linkages, the Community Council fostered a link with AmeriCorps that has proven beneficial.

In Albany, staff members of Albany Dougherty Community Partnership for Education described to their board the significance of a new grant application they had submitted to the U.S. Department of Labor. A board member experienced with federal grants then suggested that all board members strategically contact federal officials involved with the grant. The board agreed that it must emphasize the linkages between local community issues and the federal institution's mission and capabilities.

Such improved relationships with institutions happened in every Partner city. These linkages create efficiencies and make projects and services possible that would otherwise be out of the question. In addition, they provide encouragement, validation, and renewed inspiration to Partners, contributing to long-term, sustained commitment to civic change.

Integrate Economic Development and Community Development

In their years with the Pew Partnership, people in the 14 cities became quite familiar with emerging research and theory about the impact of social connections and trust on economic development.

Most Partner groups viewed the grant from the Pew Partnership as an opportunity to build linkages between human development, community development, and economic development. Kim Barber Tieman, Project Director for the Family Resource Centers in Charleston, West Virginia, said:

> *Groups of people that historically did not talk are developing inclusive business associations to plan for the economic needs of the area. Columbia Natural Resources, Bell Atlantic, Columbia Gas Transmission Corporation, and the City of Charleston have developed computer labs at Chandler and Greenwood schools. The Family Resource Centers are now partners with the West Side Business Association, and they are working together to meet the needs of the community.*

As one leader in Pine Bluff said:

> *I am concerned about the local economy. We have to build it, but the community is also important. They go hand in hand. This awareness is basic. It is not one or the other. It is both. It makes it pretty simple. The future of this town, my neighborhood, my family, myself is at stake.*

Integrating economic and community development made good sense to the Partners in most of the 14 cities. Seeing the integration begin to happen boosted some citizens whose energy and spirits needed recharging.

IN HIS OWN WORDS

ROGER MOONEY of Charleston, West Virginia, is former President of the West Side Neighborhood Association and Manager of the two One Valley Bank branches in the area. He is now Senior Vice President for Community Outreach, One Valley Bank.

At the beginning I might have said we were restricting ourselves to too small an area, but as it turns out, by focusing on Glenwood [an inner-city neighborhood school], we have seen beneficial results. People from all cuts of life are making an impact in the neighborhood. Some of our employees are involved in the mentoring program, and they are feeling rewarded. From a neighborhood perspective, the involvement of the school, Family Resource Center [FRC] volunteers, and neighbors makes it a grassroots effort. People trust and feel comfortable with a grassroots effort in their own community. It takes the politics and red tape out of it. There were lots of frustrations, but when people realized that it was a process, not a program, they trusted it.

From the Community Council, Pew, and volunteers, it has been a great working relationship, a human partnership. Pew really showed it wanted to work with Charleston. The Mayor is fully behind it. There has been an overall cooperativeness in the collaboration. Sometimes people put up obstacles to protect their turf, but there were no turf wars. The FRC did a tremendous job in breaking down turf protection. When this group started, everyone admitted there was a problem and that there was potential in this effort to do something about it. We spent more time on the positives than on the negatives.

I learned how people can be mobilized for a common cause. By working together, people can make a difference. [You can see this] when you look at all the people working together to make it work! And many are volunteers.

I am glad to see the interest that parents are showing in this particular process and how parents are beginning to speak out. Parents getting involved is the most important thing. The people felt society was burying them.

Two women, parents at Glenwood who had been involved with the FRC, spoke in front of the state legislature about health care for children. They told how they were raised without health care and the problems it had caused them. If they had not believed they would be heard and trusted, they would not have been there. It takes a lot of courage.

We don't expect to make a difference overnight, but we can begin a process that will make a difference in our neighborhood and families. If parents and families can be rebuilt, we can cure many social problems, maybe not this generation but the next.

Weave Together the Personal and the Civic

When individuals see that civic change efforts reward them personally and professionally, while also contributing to community improvement, those efforts are likely to have a long life. A judge in Charleston, South Carolina, reported that as a result of her participation in one of the structured workshops sponsored by the Charleston Civic Forum, her fundamental view of the community and its citizens had changed so much that she expected to do her work differently in the future.

In Peoria, Clyde Gulley came to a Build Peoria! staff position more than two years after the program's launch. As an independent owner of a construction company and as a minister, he had already connected to the project and made contributions to its employability training programs before joining the staff. Once on staff, Clyde explained the reasons for his day-and-night commitment to the effort:

Peoria needs this program. We have so many housing units and sidewalks that need repair. And the people in these projects need Build Peoria! so they can turn their lives around. I know construction, I know people, and I know Peoria. This job offers me a chance to use everything I know and every connection I have to make a real difference.

In Albany, Patsy Martin, Regional President for NationsBank, as well as board member and past Co-Chair of the Albany/Dougherty Community Partnership for Education, developed the idea for "Albany Assets On Line" after attending the Pew Partnership Community Building Institute, a Partner gathering held late in 1996. "Albany Assets On Line" assists in certifying minority contractors, and then uses the Internet to link the newly certified contractors with businesses that have contracts for bid. Martin sees this project as a way to help vendors and businesses locate each other, generate new contracts, draw new people into the job market, and boost the economic life of the community. The rest of the equation is that the project also benefits Martin both professionally and personally. A stronger economy will be good for her employer, NationsBank. Personally, Martin takes a great deal of satisfaction in her role in generating a promising new community-building effort.

VOICES

We started out thinking that systemic change is the same as civic change. We looked at the school, social services, health, employment, and took a formal approach. We looked at policy and practice in those systems, and tried to figure out how there could be more sharing of resources, better communications.

We came to believe that civic change is really much more about attitudes. Instead of cooperating agencies, it's personal relationships that influence values and attitudes and that represent real bridge building. It is more about face-to-face relationship, building trust, and some common language, and at its core, it's about values. The basic goal in this approach is changing internal practices. Pew never told us this; we just thought we figured it out.

Bruce Long Fox
Rapid City, South Dakota

In a civic change context, where the aim is for more than satisfactory completion of a discrete project, Partner groups recognized they could not exhaust their participants and keep finding new ones. The aim, instead, is lifelong engagement of increasing numbers of citizens. Partner groups addressed this aim in the producing-results stage by creating practices that offer satisfying and enriching opportunities for personal growth, deeper meaning, and a sense of making a difference. Practices ranging from reflective talk to the meaningful integration of community and economic development brought these significant opportunities to citizens in ways that helped address the dilemma of commitment.

STAGE 4 BUILDING CIVIC CHANGE CAPACITY

How do civic change efforts continue to succeed? That question underlies the key dilemma that may await civic change efforts once their success is beyond dispute. Findings about this stage are necessarily more speculative than was the case with the first three stages. Although some of the roots of Pew Partner groups' projects go back several years, the projects themselves are still so young that it is difficult to know for certain how the dilemmas of building civic change capacity will manifest. Based on the insights and experiences of some of the Partner groups with the longest tenure, here is an early view of the dilemma of continuing change.

THE DILEMMA OF CONTINUING CHANGE

Once successes begin to mount, people expect projects to keep succeeding. But a number of new problems appear. Challenges to the status quo can cause its beneficiaries to become resistant to change at best, or rigidly and skillfully opposed, at worst. How do people keep bringing about civic change without unduly threatening those favored by the present situation? At the same time, how do the people who have succeeded in bringing about change through a set of new processes keep both themselves and the processes fresh and open to further change as needed?

Partner groups appear to be meeting the fourth, continuing stage of change with a series of practices that have qualities of responsiveness, flexibility, and ongoing human and leadership development. Here are some of these practices.

THE PRACTICES

Build on What Happens

Partner groups agreed to be included in an experiment on civic change without knowing a great deal about what would be involved. They agreed to create projects and address community issues in new ways, even though they did not know what those new ways would be. They invented goals, strategies, and practices without the benefit of master plans or road maps from previous travelers.

Some Partner groups began using a practice that seems destined to be the cornerstone of sustaining change. They capitalized on one of the watchwords espoused by a leader of the Charleston Civic Forum, "One thing leads to another." They tried things, and when they had successes, they built on them. Each new success created a bigger opportunity for engaging more people and for taking on a larger piece of an issue. This practice of building on opportunity happened hundreds of times in Partner cities. This report has presented many examples. Here are a few more:

- In Albany, because it had established an effective model of collaboration on behalf of young people that included a strong mentoring component, the Albany/Dougherty Community Partnership for Education was asked to compete for and won a Parenting Grant from the U.S. Department of Education. In addition, building on a good working relationship with the Enterprise Community for their city, the Partnership engaged youth from the Enterprise Community as mentors for other youth, which boosted the interdependence and the resiliency of both the mentors and proteges.
- In Charleston, West Virginia, as in several other cities, one of the unexpected opportunities involved taking a successful model to a broader scale, a wider sphere of influence. In December 1996, Gaston Caperton, then West Virginia's Governor, offered $50,000 from a contingency fund so that the Charleston Partner group could educate other West Virginia communities about its Family Resource Center model.
- In Waco, then McLennan County Youth Collaboration Executive Director Cathy Jordan said:

  The change in how we address important issues in Waco, that began with the Lighted Schools project, really took root when the McLennan County Youth Collaboration was invited by the City of Waco to lead the community process and to write the plan for designation as an Empowerment Zone-Enterprise Community. By using the same approach of opening and expanding participation that we used for our Pew Partnership Lighted Schools plan, we were able to design a successful plan and receive a $3 million Enterprise community designation in 1995.
- Southern Virginia 2000 pioneered an inclusive, regional approach to civic change in the City of Danville and Pittsylvania County, aimed at workforce preparation. SV2000's efforts then inspired a regional visioning partnership, "Focus Toward the Future—Caswell/Danville/Pittsylvania—a Global Marketer of Quality Products," that expanded the geographic scope and broadened the focus, contributing to a genuine shift in how civic change occurs in the area.
- In Rapid City, Rural America Initiatives created a collaboration involving citizens, government, schools, law enforcement, and human-services agencies. These new relationships led to Rural America Initiatives becoming the first Native American member of the local United Way and the first to receive funding in its 50-year history.

Often projects took turns that surprised Partner groups. Project organizers began to work toward a specific outcome, and unanticipated events would change what they could accomplish. Often these surprises revealed where real energy for change lay. Partner groups typically took advantage of these surprises and adjusted their initial plans to capitalize on the new information or situations.

For example, the Partner group in Longview launched a project called "The Whole Village," aimed at strengthening families. The project began with a retreat for people in a specific neighborhood. The retreat participants identified a need for a more nurturing environment for children. The Partner group wrote a grant for strengthening families and nurturing children. At the outset, people in the neighborhood did not participate in the project activities as much as the Partner group had hoped. But things took a surprising turn. People in the larger community saw the project as a way to make

contributions to the neighborhood, its schools, and its families with children. Now more than 300 people from the community work in two of the elementary schools. The project has developed an unexpected, valued constituency of citizens who provide support for children and families.

Expecting surprises, and being prepared to have one thing lead to another, are widespread approaches Partner groups are using to sustain civic change. Encouraging things to lead to other things, and capitalizing on new opportunities that fall within a specific vision and approach, are key strategies Partners used to enlarge on their discrete project and work toward civic change. Alice Day explained this principle:

> *Our Longview Community Partnership started out focusing on drug-abuse prevention. Those same principles apply to any other effort to make the community healthier. So the model you use in helping create something will work for anything that needs to be done in the community, anything people choose.*

Work Within a Flexible Structure

Partner groups typically describe themselves as anything but organizations. They may refer to themselves as "an initiative," "an approach," "a framework," "a linkage," or "a network." Partners say that a very light organizational frame is a requirement for sustaining civic change. Joe Berney, President of Networking for Youth in Eugene, says, "The worst thing that can happen to a civic change effort is for it to become an organization." Berney and others refer to Networking for Youth as an approach, or simply as a network.

Ron Gleason, then President of the New East Texas Foundation in Longview and Tyler, said, "We just never got seduced by the idea that we had to have an office and a staff. That would have killed the deal."

V O I C E S

Initially, it was my impression that people perceived "civic change" as just another catchy phrase, another fad. Now I believe that more persons in our community understand "civic change" as being a process that involves maximizing your resources to benefit the people and the locality. It occurs when cooperation and collaboration replace turfism and unseen geographical boundaries or barriers.

Nettie Simon-Owens
Danville, Virginia

HandMade in America Executive Director Becky Anderson suggested that holding to a project orientation is one means of keeping organizational structure from becoming ponderous. "I'm convinced part of our success lies in the fact that we've operated as a series of linked projects. So we have had starting and stopping points, all linked to the larger vision."

Lightly structured Partner groups find they have an advantage as obvious non-competitors when they work to persuade potential allies to commit to long-term collaboration. The small-scale staffs in Partner groups can concentrate on generating change through launching projects that others are eager to own. Working on a series of linked projects offers repeated opportunities for issuing new invitations to participate, and helps create natural midstream celebratory occasions. For all these reasons, Partner groups report that deliberately keeping a low organizational profile is essential for sustaining civic change.

IN HER OWN WORDS

CATHARINE MUERDTER is a weaver and teaches weaving in the Professional Crafts Program at Haywood Community College in Clyde, North Carolina. She participated in the original task forces that set HandMade in America in motion, and is a HandMade board member.

I first heard about HandMade in its very early stages. Even when it was just being birthed, folks were talking about involving Haywood College, where I work.

I'm an optimistic person. I hoped that we might really be able to bring about an awareness of how important crafts and crafts people are in this region. I had always known that, but I didn't think other people knew it. My greatest fear at the outset was that something was going to be done to us, and maybe not in a very conscientious way. I figured it was going to get done whether we crafts people were at the table or not, so we might as well be there.

Once I got involved, I was delighted and amazed by the different people in the initial task forces. They were from different places, and different backgrounds, different jobs, but we had so many interests in common. Everyone brought particular bits of knowledge to the table.

My work on crafts in the schools is very important to me. At the beginning of work with the initial task forces, the education mission came out as very important. If we make a statement in this region about crafts being important, then crafts need to be important in the education process. While we are not trying to make children into crafts persons, we are developing lesson plans to aid classroom teachers in using craft in core curriculum classes. That's been a matter of coordinating with teachers and listening to what their needs are, as well as working with crafts people and placing them in the schools to work with kids. We want children to learn other skills through working with crafts media.

I am a crafts person. I teach crafts. I pretty much surround myself with people who are similar to me. Sometimes you lose sight of the bigger world. HandMade has forced me to get involved with larger circles and to become aware that the work I do is important in those other circles, too. I have come to see the work that I do with crafts as part of a larger whole.

What was hard was trying to come to consensus with all these people. We had our bits of arguing and our bits of everybody bringing their own issues to the table. It was hard to work through that. What made it work was that the process that we used kept focusing us on the most important issues. We kept coming back to them, and there weren't very many differences on the big things. It was the little stuff that had been bogging us down.

I have certainly learned the value of working with other people, people outside my own field. That's really important. And through this whole process and my participation in HandMade, I have personally come upon the confidence to do that. The increase in personal self-confidence is a big thing, and that has happened for other people involved in the process, too. We have just learned how to work together. HandMade is not a "them." It really is us.

Keep an Asset Focus

Most Partner groups worked from a presumption that communities have strengths, and that sound civic change builds on those strengths. This emphasis came through clearly when people in Western North Carolina spoke about "revaluing the crafts worker" and when people in Longview and Tyler emphasized "developing our people." This asset-oriented approach deepened as the Partner groups gained knowledge and experience.

Partner groups view the assets approach to civic change as having the potential to sustain citizen engagement permanently. The assets approach means that people are invited to use their gifts, their strengths, to create the kinds of communities they want. The Leadership Foundation that trained community leaders in Longview and Tyler emphasized the time-honored principle that "people support what they create." People who are involved in using their strengths to create new efforts are unlikely to resist the changes resulting from those efforts. The assets approach has long-term potential because it is likely to engage more people, and also because it reduces the resistance to change that blocks many community efforts.

Partner groups find it challenging to secure grant funding to operate on an assets basis. Alice Day, Program Manager of the Longview Community Partnership, said:

> *We deal with the frustration of the whole grant process, where it is very hard to stay the course of what you're doing and also keep developing new sources of funding. Most of them want you to do a needs assessment first thing. So there you go again with the needs focus. We know it's more effective to build on capacities than on deficits. If you go on a problem model, people tend to withdraw and disengage. 'If there is a problem, then we need some expert to come and fix it.' With a positive assets or challenge model, it's easier to get rank-and-file people engaged. You begin with where your resources are, and your strengths.*

Cathy Jordan, then Executive Director of the McLennan County Youth Collaboration in Waco, reported similar experiences:

> *There seems to be a tendency of funders to want to find something new and 'sexy' instead of continuing or building on what is in place. There is pressure to expand or do something new in order to receive funding when the base operation needs to be covered. We've always felt that failure to improve outcomes for children has not been due to a lack of knowledge about what to do, or because of a lack of successful models, but rather the lack of commitment to sustain and support coordinated and comprehensive efforts over the long haul.*

Focus Steadily on Leadership Development

Communities need a steady supply of effective leaders in order to sustain civic change. Partner groups learned that both progressive traditional leaders and newly emerging leaders are needed, and must be cultivated.

Civic change efforts that produce results typically do not cut traditional leaders off or ignore them, or, especially, pose the effort as a direct challenge to traditional leadership, unless there is a huge reason to do so. On the contrary, people in the Pew Partnership cities pointed out that traditional

leaders bring great assets to civic change work, particularly if they possess a certain set of characteristics. Partner groups said they treasure traditional leaders who are evenhanded, public spirited, visionary, open, not easily fooled or sucked into the superficial, and not greedy for recognition. Gary Pierpoint, a senior banking official in Eugene, Oregon, personified many of these characteristics, according to his fellow citizens. They said about Pierpoint and about people like him, "If they are involved, then we know it is worthwhile." The engagement of traditional leaders who manifest civic change-oriented values generates significant credibility in the early stages of a civic change effort.

Partner groups based their approaches to traditional leaders on local conditions. For example, a participant in Southern Virginia 2000 noted, "Given the history of Danville, you needed top level buy-in for success." That top level buy-in had to incorporate certain qualities, including vision and a perception of fairness and credibility. Project Coordinator Nettie Simon-Owens said:

> *Southern Virginia 2000 was led by people with insight who were above single- issue politics. They were focused on the welfare of the people in the community. Ray Griffin, the City Manager, had the vision to seek out Carlyle Ramsey, President of Danville Community College, who presided over a natural bridge-building, neutral institution, equally valued and respected by the City and the County. Carlyle Ramsey was joined by Ben Davenport, a major local businessman, and Ed Steffey, plant manager of Goodyear Tire and Rubber, who were both known as progressive, respected business people with long-term vision.*

Ramsey said, "I knew it was critical to have the direct engagement of key decision makers. Early on I put it to the leaders. 'Can you get your peers to come and participate actively?' This peer-to-peer recruiting of key business leaders was a key to our success in building the right leadership team."

At the same time, successful civic change efforts typically require that traditional leaders participate enthusiastically in bringing new people into leadership roles, and equipping them to succeed. This happened in many Pew Partnership communities. It happened when Partner groups placed decision-making power in the hands of young people in Pine Bluff, Eugene, and Charleston, South Carolina. Traditional leaders in HandMade in America committed to partnership strategies with collaborating organizations and communities, and made sure that other organizations took the lead in carrying out projects for which HandMade helped raise the funds. As another example, in order to address the amazing expansion in recent immigrant populations from many different parts of the world, Mayor Bruce Furness of Fargo, North Dakota, demonstrated a broadened vision of leadership when he requested that Moorhead, an adjacent town in Minnesota, join Fargo as part of the Cultural Diversity Project. This kind of leadership led to significant project learning. Project Director Yoke-Sim Gunaratne said, "One of the critical lessons we have learned in this project is the value of a regional orientation."

In most Pew Partnership cities, in addition to engaging progressive traditional leaders, people also devoted significant effort to developing new leaders and new leadership skills. Some communities have addressed the leadership development question directly with retreats and workshops such as those in Longview and Tyler, Pine Bluff, and Charleston, South Carolina. In other places the effort is less structured, but still vigorous.

In Pine Bluff, this direct focus on finding and developing new leaders was rewarded. Some of those

who were expected to turn out and get involved did in fact do so—young people, government, and nonprofit leaders, for example. Others, such as business leaders, who had not been counted on, also stepped up and were welcomed as an essential part of the overall mix.

Examining those Pew Partner groups that have been operating the longest yields four hypotheses about cultivating leadership in order to sustain continuous change. First, effective civic change leaders are likely to be people who operate comfortably within flexible frameworks of expressed values or guiding principles, rather than relying on requirements and directives. If they need guidebooks, they will not succeed in these frontier-like contexts.

Second, in order to sustain civic change continuously, effective leaders will likely find they must develop and express respect for widely differing kinds of people. These leaders will practice and preach openness, accessibility, and choice. They will connect enthusiastically with other leaders whose experiences and approaches provide a stark contrast to those of their own familiar circle.

Third, effective leaders of successful long-term civic change are likely to be those who know the dilemmas and paradoxes of civic change intimately. These leaders will need skills to engage others in looking for the "middle ways," those new alternatives that will yield progress in spite of the difficulties the dilemmas present.

Fourth, for long-term success, every significant civic change effort needs to have its own leader, someone who takes responsibility for putting the effort first every day. Experiments with leadership structures during the first three years of the Pew Partnership suggest that projects cannot afford to do without a daily champion—an executive director, a coordinator, or someone whose job it is to be the touchstone for all who connected with the project. According to Melanie Flatt, then Director of Girls, Inc., in Rapid City, some of the people involved in civic change work thought, "When starting a real civic change project, you need somebody committed to it full time, like a job. Someone, maybe even more than one someone, needs to make it their job."

VOICES

If those who are leading this civic change can model the good relationships and the willingness to set aside personal agendas, that helps. It seemed to make a difference in Rapid City that they saw individuals who were the leaders of this working it out. It was sort of like, "Wow, if they can do it, I guess we can, too."

Melanie Flatt
Rapid City, South Dakota

Pew Partner groups that experimented with allocating a minor portion of someone's time, in addition to that person's responsibilities for other efforts, learned that the efforts lost focus. Well-meaning people grew frustrated, and sometimes quite serious gaps in programmatic effort occurred.

Although this hypothesis about the need for daily civic change leadership may seem at odds with the Partner groups' commitment to keeping their organizational structures light and flexible, this is not a suggestion that a civic change effort create a large organization. This hypothesis is about establishing the right type and right level of staff leadership.

Alice Day, Program Manager of the Longview Community Partnership, said:

We have to accept some of the kind of contradictions we have to work with. We have to walk fine lines between extremes. We say we need to engage the whole community and that people support what they create, but it's still true there has to be some staff support for that kind of thing to work. It won't go by itself.

The challenge to Partner groups, then, is to find the right level of staff leadership. That leadership needs to be committed to the empowerment of others, and it needs to fit within a small, flexible, low-profile core structure.

In order to sustain successful civic change, leadership itself appears to change toward deeper levels of commitment. One significant source of intensified commitment seems to be leaders seeing themselves as contributing to important things such as "a good community" or "civic change."

Cultivating committed traditional and emerging leaders—and fostering powerful new linkages between the two—takes high priority with those Partner groups that aim to catalyze and sustain civic change permanently. No one knows for sure how to develop effective leaders for all situations. Even without that certainty about approaches, Partner groups have chosen to work steadily on both formal and informal leadership development.

If successful civic change is to become a permanent process in healthy communities, cities must keep experimenting to identify the essentials of that process. At this point, even the Pew Partner groups are still quite new at their work.

Even so, the 14 Partner groups are demonstrating a remarkable ability to sustain their work. The issues of sustainability and civic change were infused from the beginning of the Pew Partnership. This continuing emphasis has both encouraged and allowed the communities to stay the course which they set four years ago. In addition, the ripple effect of Partner groups' activities continues to manifest itself in all 14 communities.

Of the 14 Partner groups, 12 are continuing the work originally funded, most in expanded ways, supported by new funding they have developed. In the remaining two cities, portions of the work originally funded will continue under different auspices.

The early results from these pioneer cities suggest at least the following essentials: invest in leadership development, become skilled at capitalizing on unfolding opportunities, and build an organizational structure that is effective, flexible, and low-key.

IN CONCLUSION

This section on lessons learned considers formative questions about civic change. It is important, in conclusion, to draw on the experiences of Partner groups as their civic change efforts move from projects to progress.

WHAT CONSTITUTES CIVIC CHANGE? The experiences in 14 smaller cities across four years of a civic change experiment suggest that civic change is both a set of activities leading toward large and significant community improvements and a way of working toward those improvements. Civic change is accomplished when citizens who have different backgrounds and interests agree to work together for the long haul on deep community change, often so deep that it is at the level of values such as citizenship, democracy, and fairness.

Civic change depends on developing and nurturing new working relationships among citizens and organizations, and between new leaders and progressive traditional leaders. Civic change efforts may unfold as a series of linked projects, each with short-term goals and built-in opportunities for celebrations that increase the sense of community.

The staff who provide the consistent guidance for civic change efforts typically operate within small, low-profile, flexible structures that they are reluctant to call organizations. The staff and citizens successful in civic change efforts learn to strike an effective balance between the need for slow, developmental, inclusive processes and the equally strong need for products, results, and demonstrated effectiveness.

HOW IS CIVIC CHANGE DIFFERENT FROM VOLUNTEERISM? All civic change efforts depend on citizen volunteers, because they depend on people willingly taking responsibility for addressing their own communities' issues. Yet civic change is not the same as volunteerism. Civic change includes citizens forming partnerships with institutions and organizations that depend, in part, on paid staff to accomplish their missions. Civic change may require that citizens take responsibility for making high-impact community decisions together, incurring a level of risk and exposure that are not elements of many volunteer situations. Civic change depends on volunteerism but is not defined by the same boundaries.

WHAT DISTINGUISHES CIVIC CHANGE FROM SUCCESSFUL COLLABORATION AMONG PUBLIC-PRIVATE GROUPS OR HUMAN-SERVICE PROVIDERS? All successful civic change has a collaborative quality and may, in fact, explicitly depend on particular collaborations. Yet civic change is broader than many community collaborations. Civic change adds an element of commitment to inclusion, to learning and development, to incorporating new leaders, and to citizen empowerment. Civic change efforts aim to change how communities accomplish improvement. None of these additional, essential civic change features is necessary for successful collaborations.

HOW IS CIVIC CHANGE DIFFERENT FROM A COMMUNITY PROJECT AIMED AT ADDRESSING PROBLEMS LIKE VIOLENCE OR UNDER-EMPLOYMENT? Civic change often incorporates community

projects aimed at particular topics. Most civic change projects, in fact, function as a series of related and linked projects within an overall frame of permanent work toward community improvement. A long-term time frame is one feature of civic change that most distinguishes it from typical community projects.

Civic change efforts do not promise that a project or two will accomplish significant change. In fact, the civic change context is one of continuous improvement.

Unlike some projects, many civic change efforts are asset-based, and address root causes or root opportunities that underlie a host of seemingly different community problems. Other civic change features also may not be present in well-run projects. For example, a project may succeed even though it engages no new people and depends on old, closed-leadership approaches. Civic change cannot succeed under those conditions.

HOW DO COMMUNITIES ACCOMPLISH CIVIC CHANGE? Section Three presented many examples of communities' approaches to accomplishing civic change. Overall, these practices add up to a change in the dimensions of community-improvement efforts and the way they are viewed.

The 14 Pew Partner groups reached wider into their communities than typical projects do. All 14 focused on getting new people to their communities' influence and decision-making tables. Most Partner groups expanded opportunities for citizens to be successful by offering training and development experiences. All Partner groups expanded as they achieved successes. Most expanded either the populations they addressed or the geographical scale of their efforts.

The Partner groups adopted longer time frames. Civic change projects, by definition, operate beyond the short-term time frames associated with many projects, especially those that are grant supported. Adopting longer time frames freed Partner groups to address problems and issues requiring generations of work. Some Partner groups saw the need for long-term change in institutions such as schools. Some set visions and goals that will take at least 20 years and often longer to accomplish.

The longer time frame made it possible for people in the Pew Partnership groups to go deeper into significant issues and significant sources of community strength. Nearly every project addressed issues of separation and exclusion, particularly those based on race and ethnic difference. Some Partner groups' visions of their own work deepened as they learned and gained experience. In Eugene, a project initially aimed at linking young people with adults who have work experience evolved toward a vision of a community where every young person has a sense of hope, belonging, and security. In Rapid City, where the initial focus was creating positive personal and organizational connections for particularly at-risk young people, the vision evolved toward commitment to creating a community that is safe and good for all people, especially for children and youth. Visions and commitments in the Partner communities typically deepened in the direction of such values as democracy, equity, trust, systemic wholeness or connectedness, respect, and permanence.

Partner groups accomplished civic change by maintaining openness. Continuing openness as a philosophy and practice is made easier when civic change unfolds as a series of related projects, each of which has a different starting point. Most Partner groups maintain a commitment to openness and willingness to include new people, even after efforts are well underway. Without this commitment to taking in new people, who have new interests and new ideas, along with new needs, civic change

efforts might run the risk of becoming simply isolated projects. Instead, most Partner groups built on one success to create another opportunity.

Partners hooked ideas together, creating continually evolving new structures. When small successes created more enthusiasm and new possibilities, Partner groups capitalized by building new opportunities, or by hooking previously disconnected efforts together. In Western North Carolina, a focus on promoting the region's craft heritage through a guidebook expanded to include a downtown-development effort, when four small towns asked for help in developing assets that would merit the towns' inclusion in the guidebook. In Longview, a project aimed at strengthening families and nurturing children in a particular neighborhood evolved into an opportunity to develop a much wider constituency of community support for children when people outside the neighborhood became tutors, mentors, and adopt-a-school sponsors. One thing led to another, and civic change practitioners in the 14 communities incorporated that principle as an essential constituent element of civic change.

Finally, in addition to the dimensional differences and other distinctive features of civic change, it is important to emphasize that most Pew Partner groups thrived in the experimental conditions of this initiative. Since all continue, out of necessity, to invent new ways of working, the Partners seem likely to keep using their discovery-oriented approach.

C5

SECTION 4

FOR FUNDERS, COACHES, AND EVALUATORS:

Lessons Learned from the Pew Partnership

Three important entities played essential roles in creating the Pew Partnership: The Pew Charitable Trusts (the funder); the national project office in Charlottesville, Virginia; and the national advisory board. Each of these entities provided thoughtful guidance for the Partner groups in the 14 cities.

THE PEW CHARITABLE TRUSTS: VISION

The original design of the smaller-cities initiative originated from The Pew Charitable Trusts' board and staff interest in testing solutions to some of the most difficult urban issues in smaller arenas. In addition, part of the design strategy was to allow communities to select an issue of critical importance to that particular community. These two elements—selecting smaller cities as urban laboratories and asking communities to select the issue on which their proposal would be based—provided the foundation on which the civic change work was built.

These elements proved to be an excellent framework for encouraging smaller cities to address large, important community opportunities and issues—those likely to require decades or generations of change. In support of this broad vision of civic change, staff members from The Pew Charitable Trusts participated in all Pew Partnership gatherings, providing cities with valuable evidence of the Trusts' steady support of the Partner groups' work.

THE NATIONAL ADVISORY BOARD: EXPERIENCE IN ACTION

As they launched the smaller-cities initiative, The Pew Charitable Trusts appointed an extraordinary national advisory board. These advisors provided insight and practical experience for the development and execution of what became the Pew Partnership.

Advisory board members participated in this project at an unusually high level. Their participation stems from the ability of the national project office to create meaningful opportunities for their contributions to the project and to link them directly with communities.

THE NATIONAL PROJECT OFFICE: TRUE PARTNERS

The national project office for the Pew Partnership in Charlottesville is tiny and has never had more than three people working there full time. For the whole period of the grants, and for the year the grant process was in the planning stages, this small office organized and carried out its work in a way that is worthy of note to potential funders, coaches, and evaluators of other civic change work.

Above all, the Pew Partnership administrative and support structure has practiced consistency and operated with integrity. While the project staff members have carried out their work in several specific noteworthy ways, overall, their work is most distinctive in the extent to which it has served as an example for what the Pew Partnership wanted to see in the 14 communities.

The project office focused on the principle of civic change as the cornerstone of the initiative. This orientation to civic change, rather than to one issue area, permitted a kind of variety among the 14 projects that is unusual and that proved to be a particularly strong source of mutual learning, new insights, and shared knowledge as the project unfolded.

C7

The project office, with the enthusiastic support of the project's advisory board and Pew Trusts' staff, conceived of the Pew Partnership as a discovery process, an experiment. To a great extent, the project office gave Partner groups this message: *Pay attention to where you are, who is with you, and what will work there, rather than expecting directives from us.* This quality of openness to discovery had a liberating effect on communities, which then developed inventions and change strategies that simply could not have been dictated from outside in a less-experimental situation.

V O I C E S

The Pew Partnership made a big difference here.
The words "community development"—
you hear them all the time now.

Ron Gleason
Tyler, Texas

The project office consistently created choice for the 14 Partner groups instead of requiring and mandating specific behaviors. In this way the support office created the "public space" for the Partners so that their own experiences could breathe vitality and local wisdom into project-related efforts. In doing this, the project staff and advisors modeled an extraordinary degree of respect for the assets the communities possess rather than treating them as needy of specific direction from outside.

The project office and the funder—The Pew Charitable Trusts—encouraged the 14 cities to tackle issues that could not be "solved" within the grant period. This gave the Partner groups freedom to address important problems instead of limiting themselves to projects that could be started and finished within three years.

The project office hosted semi-annual gatherings for the Partners that won warm praise from participants. The project office introduced stimulating top-ranked innovators and experts at these gatherings, and created a variety of formal and informal structures that fostered peer learning among Partners.

The Partners underscored the value of learning from each other during these events, and the opportunities to get to know the people from other cities well enough for real bonds of trust and mutual support to emerge. Cathy Jordan, then Executive Director of the McLennan County Youth Collaboration in Waco, said, "The Pew meetings were keys to breakthroughs." Joe Berney, President of Networking for Youth in Eugene, echoed this sentiment: "The national conferences and networking brought some of the most exciting moments of breakthrough learning. We would bring teams in to hear from the inspirational people and network with others. Then the teams we brought came back home and catapulted us to another level, always."

V O I C E S

I used to call myself a wood sculptor.
Now I call myself a citizen artist.

Stony Lamar
Bakersville, North Carolina

The people in the project office introduced themselves and their roles to the Partner groups in a careful, specific way, and then they stuck with their story. They made civic change the goal, and then

kept their own focus on that goal consistently. They acted as true partners and collaborators, not overseers. Over time, the Partner groups began to trust that the responses and encouragement they received from the project office would remain consistent in tone and philosophy. The Pew Partnership staff members never changed the nature of their suggestions about ways to proceed. They never began prescribing approaches and did not behave punitively when Partner groups undertook experimental approaches that did not go well.

Significantly, the project office served as an intermediary between the national funder—The Pew Charitable Trusts—and the Partner groups in certain ways that benefited everyone involved. The project office provided the funder ample information and knowledge about the Partners, taking the time to provide more information, at a more highly synthesized level, than the Partners could have produced on their own. The project office produced this high-quality information with minimal intrusion into the energy and time of central project actors in the 14 cities, saving significant Partner energy for civic change work itself.

In addition, the project office successfully focused the Partner groups' attention on the importance and significance of communicating results and developing skills in public relations in order to sustain civic change efforts. Using a steady, skilled combination of education, information, resources, and cajolery, the support staff assisted the 14 Partners in developing much higher profiles for themselves and their efforts than could have been possible under other scenarios. The higher profiles created a greater sense of movement, possibility, and hope than is typical of community-change efforts.

The national project staff took responsibility at the beginning of the initiative to create an advisory board of outstanding composition. The project staff recruited each member of the advisory board carefully and thoughtfully to bring an impressive body of knowledge and experience to the project.

Once the advisory board members had agreed to serve, the project staff took many steps to equip them for effective service. The project staff explicitly and implicitly underscored to the advisory board members their importance to the project. The staff made careful decisions about such things as the location of meetings, the frequency and appropriateness of information sharing, and opportunities for advisory board members to work directly as advisors to all the communities in regular gatherings. Some advisory board members also worked with individual Partner groups from time to time.

When advisory board members described their roles to the research team, they said they had come to think of themselves as partners, and they credited the project office with fostering the partnership ethic in practical and consistent ways. This commitment to making partnership real is the hallmark of the Pew Partnership's national project office. Rather than act as judge or teacher, the project office chose from the project's outset to learn with the Partner groups, and to encourage and support their experimental efforts at creating and sustaining civic change. This partnership philosophy proved to be an effective model for Partner groups, and served as the basis for the project office's unusually strong, positive relationship with the initiatives in these 14 cities.

SECTION

5

CONCLUSION:

Civic Change Hypotheses

At all stages in this experimental effort, Partner groups and people in the 14 Partner cities gained experience and insight into the nature of civic change. Some themes seem to recur in Partners' practices and in their overall approaches to different dilemmas. This section presents eight of these themes as assertions or hypotheses that can be considered early products from this civic change experiment. The research team saw these themes as interwoven strands in a Partner group's experience. Like the stages and dilemmas in Section Three, these hypotheses are more fluid in experience than their documentation suggests; far from reflecting eight discrete experiences, these hypotheses are simply analytical tools meant to further conversation and continue discovery about civic change.

HYPOTHESIS 1:
Civic Change Brings More Players to the Table.

At each stage—envisioning, planning, producing, reflecting, continuing—civic change depends on more people and newer people at the table. Partners opened doors to formerly excluded citizens. Decision-making tables expanded.

The experience of engaging with people who have diverse viewpoints in one arena informs and equips citizens to carry out change efforts in multiple arenas. Engagement with participants with different views and interests is the on-the-job training program for citizens who intend to accomplish significant, lasting community improvement.

> *This project provided an appropriate forum for the localities and entities within the localities to work together on a common issue with clear goals and expectations. The usual barriers to collaboration were not present. The purpose and intent of the Pew project were straightforward, and the process dictated inclusiveness of representation and participation.*
>
> ***Nettie Simon-Owens, Danville, Virginia***

HYPOTHESIS 2: New and Different Players Inspire Changed Relationships.

In every Pew Partnership city, people intentionally created new relationships. People in Partner groups got to know each other after all had walked through the open doors of new civic change projects. Partner groups cultivated new leaders' skills and linked new leaders with progressive traditional leaders for powerful new alliances.

All of this work took considerable time. Yet because of the long-term aspirations of the civic change components of the initiative, the investment in relationship building seemed worthwhile to the Partners.

> *As to what we thought when we started, I would say most people were thinking in terms of projects—in terms of quick-fix solutions. What we have learned is that civic change is more about the process. The actual outcome is often ambiguous. It took two years and lots of sub-grantees before we fully came to realize that what we are building here is really more about relationships, about capacity, and the long term.*
>
> ***Michael Gilliard, Pine Bluff, Arkansas***

> *Trust [between the two primary-funded Partner groups] is only developed through time. We needed that time at the beginning of the project to do that. And we also needed help. We needed information and technical resources, probably from the outside.*
>
> *I think it did happen. We were able to form a philosophical goal between the two organizations that we built on then to form the Civic Change Advisory Board and*

everything that occurred after that. It demanded unselfishness. It demanded the kind of attitude that you're going to give more than you're going to get back. It required the willingness of leaders to release some of their control and leadership. But we also learned that once it is established, it can be very powerful.

Melanie Flatt, Rapid City, South Dakota

HYPOTHESIS 3: Changed Relationships Make True Collaboration Possible.

The 14 Partner groups knew from the outset that accomplishing their projects would require collaboration. Several already had experience in collaborative ventures, both successful and disappointing. Some partners knew that collaboration in itself was no panacea. Others knew that real collaboration grows over time as people gain experience with each other.

Early on the word collaboration was tossed around lightly. We know that it is important, but on paper it appears a lot easier than it is. It's slow and messy, and it's what you have to have for long-term success.

Alice Day, Longview, Texas

Collaboration works best when it is natural, not forced. Lots of early collaborations feel, and really are, forced. But they must grow--not by being precise about everything, but through relationships and through getting comfortable with ambiguity. Collaboration is looser than most of the promotional pieces on it suggest.

Mike Loftin, Santa Fe, New Mexico

HYPOTHESIS 4: Civic Change Unfolds in a Long-term Time Frame.

The change in relationships and the experience of authentic collaboration that characterized civic change work in the Pew Partnership communities flourished within a climate of expectation that the work would be long term. Although project funding from the Partnership was for a relatively short three years, with an unanticipated extension of modest fourth-year funding for eight communities, Partner groups took the premise of a civic change experiment to mean that they could tackle issues of such depth and seriousness that the efforts could not possibly be "finished" within the grant period. The presumption that it is important to address issues that must be addressed across time influenced many Partners' decisions, from choice of issue to investment in learning, relationship building, and true collaboration.

Early on people are looking for just the right program that is going to fix things. For example, when our City Council created the Longview Drug Task Force they had in mind winning the war on drugs. Now we don't find that metaphor very helpful. We

are looking at the ongoing process of building capable, responsible young people. Our work is about prevention in a kind of comprehensive sense. It is the kind of work that is never done. You don't win this war and go home. Originally people believed the concept was going to fly because of who held key positions, like mayor and newspaper editor. Since then we have had a lot of turnover in leadership at the city level. The upheaval has been difficult, and I wouldn't have chosen it, but at the same time we have moved forward through it. We have learned that the work must continue regardless of what kind of political thinking prevails at the moment. Now more people realize it is not really a movement depending on a certain ideology or leader. Now we are working for long-term change.

Alice Day, Longview, Texas

HYPOTHESIS 5: Civic Change Involves Going Deep into Significant Issues and Values.

With the long-term time frame and the potential for investing in new learning and new relationships, Partners worked their way deeper and deeper into the heart of what makes communities function, and what makes democracy work.

You need to work on hope. The key has to do with developing a vision, getting it into terms that come up for people--for us, for example, going beyond the vision of every young person getting a job. Now we say we want everyone to have a sense of hope and belongingness, usefulness, purpose, and meaning. What we are focused on now is the whole notion of democratic citizenship being bigger than work. People are starting to gravitate toward that. In lots of cases the vision is the missing element. It needs to be the part that gets us from here to there.

Joe Berney, Eugene, Oregon

When civic change efforts deepen, it is typically in the direction of fundamental values. Partners articulated an understanding that their efforts moved toward the essence of such fundamental values as active citizenship, equity, and inclusion.

We came to believe civic change is really much more about attitudes. We are focused around a particular issue: violence, especially as it relates to youth. In doing this we are trying to change the environment of the community. To reach into the idea of citizenship that people have here in Rapid. That's really what is at issue. Basically, this doesn't have much to do with money or policy, or with other things associated with systemic change. It is more about face-to-face relationships, building trust, and some common language, and at its core, it is about values. That's real civic change.

Bruce Long Fox, Rapid City, South Dakota

HYPOTHESIS 6: People Take Responsibility to Accomplish Civic Change Themselves.

While most civic change efforts in the Pew Partner cities included government and other institutions as players and partners with specific roles, civic change efforts do not focus on getting institutions to do new or better things for people. Instead, civic change depends on people taking responsibility for addressing possibilities and challenges in their communities. Partner groups chose to address big issues, requiring a long time-commitment, lots of collaborative approaches, and a strong measure of civic responsibility by ordinary, everyday citizens. If people needed new skills—and in most communities, they did—the Partner groups concentrated on formal and informal training and learning opportunities. Gradually, as the years of the initiative unfolded, Partner groups began to see a change in citizen empowerment and commitment.

> *We began to get away from the idea that we need some expert to come in and show us what to do. More people are convinced now that we have to figure out in our own community what is best. It's kind of like we do need expert guidance on what the research shows and all that kind of thing, but there is no change until people change. Otherwise, it is like trying to reduce heart disease by having cardiologists sit at a table and explain the reason for it. This kind of work really does depend on enlisting rank-and-file citizens. It is not just window dressing.*
>
> ***Alice Day, Longview, Texas***

One hallmark of people taking increased responsibility is that personal growth and change became explicitly interwoven with community change. Across the 14 cities people reported their own changes—increased confidence, improved leadership skills, new close relationships, increased knowledge—as deeply significant aspects of their civic change experiences.

HYPOTHESIS 7: Civic Change Depends on Invention Appropriate to Each Local Context.

Civic change projects do not come with an Owner's Manual describing appropriate set up and specific dangers that must be avoided. Instead, each group of people must start from scratch to understand what is true about a specific local situation. They must then invent both structures and strategies that will work. While a few guidelines make good common sense—for example, "Collaborate;" "Be inclusive;" "Think long term"—each group must create new ways to bring these vague promises to life in a real community. Civic change practitioners operate as inventors of new knowledge about constructing successful communities.

> *So much got started and is continuing. I just had a meeting on Monday to get with the new director of PATH [a partner agency] to talk about how together the city, PATH, and the Fourth Partner Foundation [Ron's employer] are going to continue the*

neighborhood-development work.

The point I want to make is that the components of this thing are continuing to go on. We're pretty good about keeping up our work even though we all switch jobs and do whatever we need to make it happen.

Ron Gleason, Tyler, Texas

HYPOTHESIS 8: Guiding Civic Change Requires Responsiveness and the Ability to Find Balance Among Different, Positive Ways of Accomplishing Change.

The people at the heart of civic change efforts, the staff of the Partner groups, keep their focus on large, long-term goals, while practicing a low-key, engaging approach to leadership. They typically operate by invitation, inclusion, consensus, and listening. They respond to what they learn, adapting and flexing toward possibilities and opportunities.

Staff leaders point out that effective guidance for civic change comes from responding to situations with appropriate actions. Not only is it essential to respond to opportunities that emerge, it is also necessary to learn how to judge when even a good thing can go too far. People spoke of the need to learn how to balance a number of pairs of opposing change forces.

For example, staff leaders reported experiences with attempting to find the right balance in arenas such as these:

- It is important to celebrate short-term victories and milestones in order to sustain group energy and support a strong sense of community. On the other hand, if too much emphasis is placed on celebration, the effort feels like a project that is completed rather than an ongoing initiative.
- Engaging citizens in carrying out the work of civic change is vital. Yet if too much is expected of citizens without any staff support, efforts falter. On the other hand, if staff take on too much responsibility and do citizens' work for them, civic change dies.
- Genuine civic change on important issues depends on effective process, which requires an investment in human time and energy. On the other hand, effective civic change efforts must produce concrete results, or they will not compel people to stay engaged.
- Civic change efforts need to have an organized, effective quality, yet too much formal organizational structure at the core of the effort can be deadly. Civic change is accomplished by multiple groups, individuals, and organizations. The core organization typically is low-key, flexible, and interested in giving away credit; it has a coordinative focus rather than a directive one.

The purpose of the Pew Partnership initiative was to generate new knowledge about how citizens can make significant, long-lasting improvements in their communities. These hypotheses reflect some connected themes that emerged from the first four years of experience in 14 smaller American cities.

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